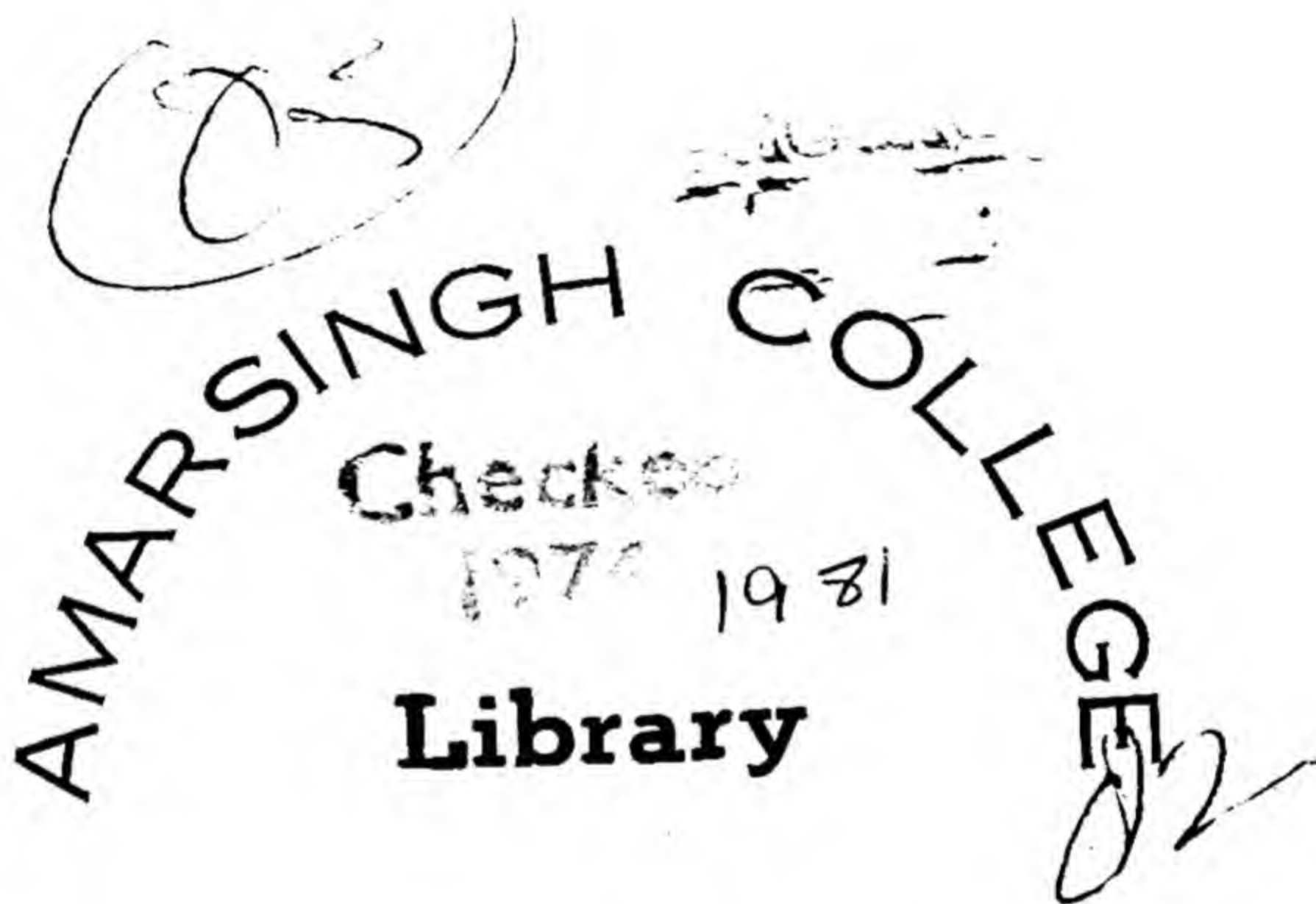


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WAR AND IMMORALITY

LESSON FROM THE LAST WAR BEING WARNINGS
FOR TO-DAY

by

SUDHINDRA LAL ROY, M. A.

Columnist, Indian and World Affairs, "Behar Herald"

KITAB-MAHAL
ALLAHABAD

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PRINTED BY M. K. DIKSHIT, M. A., AT THE JAGAT PRESS,
ALLAHABAD AND PUBLISHED BY KITAB-MAHAL
56-A, ZERO ROAD, ALLAHABAD.

PREFACE

A peculiar feature of the present world-conflagration is the fact that people are talking of 'post-war reconstruction' even before the end of the War is in sight. The man-in-the-street, a member of the race, "Multitude," has taken up the cue and is finding in a discussion of the subject the satisfaction of an emotional hanker which is as stupid as it is imaginary. Post-War 'reconstruction' cannot be built up on hates that are at present being generated against present-day enemies. While it is true that in the Dictator-ridden countries, on the overthrow of the dictators, the people will be there to look after 'reconstruction' exerting their conscious will on the problem of the future, the masses in the democratic countries, being but multiple asses in group forms, will have their Lloyd Georges and Clemenceaus who will carry their votes by creating fanciful demons, the whilst they sell the multitudes to the mercies of the plutocrats by underhand negotiations. A Beveridge Plan is but a soporific, a nostrum to lull into sleep a light-headed restless patient, when he is being effectually castrated.

Political and Economic re-constructions are bound to be compromises in which the slickest will win. And those in power are at present the slickest. Unless there is a change in the moral plane, no reconstruction can have the least value for humanity at large.

This book attempts to show the moral loss of the human society from War. War is not a biological necessity, as some German thinkers taught their countrymen early in this century. War is a biological danger to society. That this War is not free from those dangers is apparent from certain discussions going on in the press. It is enough for me to refer to Col. L. W. Harrison's article in the *Spectator*, June 11, 1943, entitled, "The War Disease". The Colonel

is Adviser on venereal diseases in the British Ministry of Health. Read what he says about the increase of syphilis in England, since the War broke out. Apart from this official recognition of the Biological danger, there is evidence of an unrest in the mind of the Man-in-the-street. Here is an extract from a letter by one J. A. Armstrong (pp. Hut 37), spl. coy., 1, Oxford Bucks, Home Forces, published in the *Picture Post*, dated Nov. 6, 1943.

"We shall be wanting to marry decent English girls, but in so many places we see girls disgracing themselves in public with strangers, being embraced as they walk along the street, exchanging loud vulgar slang, and allowing themselves to be petted. These girls are ruining British standards of behaviour and self-respect that we are fighting for."

These are the considerations that led me to compile and compose this volume. This book would not have been published, unless my friend Mr. A. K. Seyne, Deputy Librarian, Allahabad Public Library, had materially helped me by making accessible to me many of the books, quotations from which form the bulk of this volume.

I am obliged to Mr. M. C. Samaddar, M. A., the erudite and enterprising Editor of "Behar Herald" for having permitted me to include in the first chapter an article of mine published in his well-known journal.

S. L. R.

To
SUDHĀKANĀ ROY
my smiling co-partner
in adversities
for over twenty-five years.

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CHAPTER I

WAR AND PROSTITUTION

FROM THE PRESENT LOOKING BACK TO THE PAST

Early in 1943, the newspapers of Calcutta gave publicity to the fact that the Government had requisitioned certain houses for the purpose of brothels meant for soldiers. Civilians living in respectable localities, in the proximity of military billets, were asked to vacate houses so that these might be utilised for brothels for the use of soldiers. As the people affected were Anglo-Indians, some Christian Journals raised a protest against this action of the Government. Even the Metropolitan of India, the most Reverend Dr. Westcott protested vehemently in both lay and secular journals. At that time, this writer contributed a note in the columns of the *Behar Herald* (published from Patna) on the subject, particularly with reference to the protest that had been voiced by the *Calcutta Diocesan Magazine*. This is what this writer said:

"The writer of the *Calcutta Diocesan Magazine* who has developed this moral frenzy was either a kid during the last War (1914-18) or his knowledge has been too cloistered to know a thing or two on the subject. Instead of raising his voice against what the Government feels to be a stern necessity, he should raise his voice against War as an institution. During the last War, all the belligerent governments

provided brothels in War Fronts and appointed agents to recruit women for these brothels. Recruits came easily because War conditions had left many women destitute and, during the absence of their men-folk on active service, the women often went into brothels to earn and live. Nymphomania developes in all belligerent countries and investigators have been forced to the conclusion that the effect of War is to intensify sexual libido to a point where convention, modesty and the sense of sexual morality cease to exercise the slightest restraining influence. Laxity of sexual morals accompanies all wars. War favours the over-flow of the sexual instinct.....As regards France, the "Republic a procuress" became a common expression during the last War.

"While no protest against War was made then, as now, there was much protest by moralists and social workers against officially organised prostitution.

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"War kills the conscience of men or, rather, it may be the other way round, men who have no conscience create wars. As long as war-mongering remains, so long will prostitution be a government institution during War periods. But governments are mistaken. They think that the supply of brothels for the satisfaction of the brute in soldiers will protect the average woman of decent society. But the last War's statistics showed how most women in the belligerent countries went amuck so far as libido was concerned. The women, specially of the well-to-do upper classes, gave a total good-bye to sex morality.

The Edinburgh Review, in 1916, observed: "the sexual act would soon have no more significance than a game of tennis. It is only the problem of pregnancy that complicates matters." And the author added that so long as a man was careful not to get them into trouble, girls and women would accord them favours as easily as give them a dance. And this was in what formerly used to be regarded as the most moral country in Europe.

"Therefore, the brothels are likely to help in the spread of venereal diseases, unless prostitutes in them are kept under constant official surveillance. Soldiers will carry venereals from these brothels to the homes of those whose women, either through the absence of, or the want of, a husband, will shower patriotic favours on men in Khaki. Even surveillance is ineffective in spreading venereals on account of clandestine prostitution which the Police cannot check. The ultimate effect of such conditions is race-degeneration."*

The Government of India, of course, issued communiqués explaining away the affair. The explanation, however, was lame and for some time angry priests and prelates carried on the controversy which is now silent. In such affairs it is very difficult for governments to explain publicly a matter of ugly necessity. It is remarkable, however, that neither the Metropolitan of India nor the other devout Christians who protested against the immorality of military brothels were able to go to the

*Behar Herald, dated February 2, 1943.

root of the matter and protest against War as a social evil.

When a War is on, all belligerent governments suppress anti-war opinion as treasonous, while a subsidised and controlled Press devotes itself to sing the prowess of heroes at the battle front and of the victories day to day achieved by marching armies. None, however, not even religious preachers take into consideration the social evils that are the necessary concomitants of War.

During the 1914-18 War, the present writer joined the armed forces towards the close of the War and obtained a glimpse of life in the army. The last War was not as mechanised as the present one and soldiers formerly were recruited in, peace time, from among the dregs of society. And during the War, many confirmed jail-birds were released for joining the Army. Off duty, wine and women seemed to be their only pre-occupation. Their language was most vulgar and every sentence they uttered was interjected with a slang word denoting the sex-act. It was, of course, different with the territorial and Auxilliary forces which were mainly recruited from the educated middle class.

When, away from the battle front, soldiers were resting or when they were awaiting demobilisation immediately after the War, they naturally indulged in venal recreations, and prostitution, open or clandestine, became a natural institution wherever armies were stationed. Prostitution is a recognised profession in every country except England and therefore, the British Government did not openly

provide brothels in India for soldiers during the last War. The authorities, however, recognised the sex-need of their soldiers and this writer, though very young at that time, could see how the authorities provided for this in a devious way. When this writer was at Poona, in 1919, working as an assistant in the office of the Field Controller of Military Accounts, he found that those offices which contained a large number of British soldiers were provided with a contingent of Anglo-Indian girls working as typists, stenographers or clerks. Many were the occasions when one girl or other was caught during office hours either in the record room or elsewhere in the actual sex-act. Even then we, the Indian clerks, came to recognise that the employment of girl clerks and girl punkha-pullers in the offices was the vicarious method of supplying material for the libidinous outlet of the British soldiers.

War-prostitution was rampant in the last War in many forms and ex-soldiers and medical men who came in intimate contact with the conditions then prevailing and with the results that inevitably followed after the War, have recorded their opinions strongly and openly. It is, however, strange that churchmen or moralists did not prepare mankind during the twenty-five years that intervened between this and the last War, against the social dangers of War. Churchmen were no less keen than capitalist politicians in upholding and perpetuating the political injustices perpetrated after the War and in carrying on propaganda against new ideals of social existence that were being experimented in Russia—

ideals that can make War unnecessary. The following pages have been prepared for the purpose of debunking those who wish to pose as moralists by inveigling against the effect while fully taking part in the cause. Race-degeneration due to sex-immorality is the inevitable consequence of War, when normal social life is completely disrupted.

CHAPTER II

WAR AND PROSTITUTION

A PICTURE OF OFFICIALLY SPONSORED PROSTITUTION

It is an historical fact that prostitutes are inseparable companions of armies on active services. Soldiers use their pay and the wealth they acquire by loot to purchase the embrace of woman. An Arab historian has, in describing the third Crusade, written: "Three hundred pretty Frankish women came in a ship for the entertainment of the Frankish soldiers to which task they assiduously devoted themselves; for the Frankish soldiers refuse to fight if deprived of women."

During the Middle Ages in Europe, and specially during the 'Thirty Years' War, records are available to show that a large section of the inevitable 'Camp-followers' was women. These were not necessarily all professional prostitutes. Many women followed armies under various pretexts. The canteen-women, for example, supplied the soldiers not only with drinks but also their bodies for which the soldiers paid quite handsomely.

The last European War (1914-18), in course of four years, involved the movement of troops on a huge and colossal scale and this necessitated "a proportionate turnover in the sexual commodity the combatants required. From the first week of the War, there was an enormous increase in the

number of brothels, as well as in clandestine prostitution, in all the belligerent countries (except England, which had no War Front) and in all the Fronts.”*

No one can deny that prostitution increased considerably in Europe during the period 1914-18. There was nothing new in the phenomenon, it was a case of history repeating itself.

Just as it happened in India in 1943 as mentioned in the last Chapter, in Europe also during the 1914-18 War, those, who were frankly and enthusiastically in favour of War, raised a howl of protest against prostitution. Patriots denounced prostitution as a great danger to national defence. This denunciation, however, was not so much because the brothels were a menace to social hygiene and race-propagation, but because these brothels were utilised by each belligerent in the invaded areas, as dens of espionage. The prostitutes were quite prepared to raise their profession in their own estimation by engaging in patriotic activities, which consisted in extracting military information from their lovers of the enemy camp. The governments also helped the formation of such an attitude among them and utilised prostitutes for espionage work. In most of the privately owned brothels, the proprietor demanded from the women engaged on the establishment that they should induce the soldiers to buy as many drinks as possible. It can easily be believed that the prostitute was not required to possess special

*Sexual Life During War, by H. C. Fischer and Dr. E. X. Dubois, Chapter XII.

skill as a spy in order to cajole secrets out of the enemy soldiers because drink loosens the tongue. Sometime after the War had started, the military authorities in invaded territories prohibited the use of alcoholic beverages in brothels to obviate to some extent the dangers of espionage by prostitutes. Such orders, however, were more observed in the breach in the brothels specially reserved for officers, where drinks were always obtainable. It can be well realised that while the invaders objected to prostitution, the patriots of the invaded countries could not condemn it, because the spying activities of the prostitutes went in their favour.

The dangers of espionage in brothels was particularly serious for the Germans in Belgium and Poland, and to cope with this danger the famous "Ludendorff System" was devised. This meant that the average soldier should be kept in such profound ignorance on all questions of military-strategy, that a prostitute could not pump out of him more information than what she herself was aware of.

The following is a quotation from a notice issued by the French military authorities:

"It has come to my notice that certain girls and women of.....who maintain close relations with officers, non-commissioned officers, privates, cooks and muleteers of the brigade, have been kept informed of all the movements of the various battalions.

"Unit-commanders are requested to remind all subordinates without exception, but particularly those serving in the valleys behind the lines, that they are committing a grave military offence in

allowing their women friends to extract information from them. They are thereby risking trial by court-martial for complicity in espionage."

In normal times, prostitution serves the requirements of unmarried men who cannot satisfy their desires in a normal way, and the requirements of depraved married men who cannot indulge in their erotic fancies at home. But in War time, prostitution becomes general and often obligatory. Moralists, therefore, became anxious about the moral and social consequences of the habits of depravity which the men on active service were imbibing under the benevolent patronage of the governments. This is how Madame Marthe Bigot, a noted French Social Worker, protested :

"Prostitution is an official department of the French Republic ! The home of the rights of man and citizenship is encouraging the most shameful social cancer and the most ignoble survival of slavery. How many men who have left their homes will return to their wives in a 'damaged' state !"

The risk of venereal disease was the most powerful argument against officially sponsored prostitution. The soldier's brothel were hot-beds of venereals, specially of syphilis. I shall describe later the frantic efforts that military authorities made to check the spread of these diseases. But it is needless to point out that even the most rigorous measures fail to check it. Sociologists, moralists, doctors and patriots united in a cry against prostitution, the disseminator of syphilis.

But if prostitution had been suppressed that

would not have checked the propagation of syphilis. Prostitution would have been driven underground. Soldiers would have continued sexual contacts with prostitutes and infection could not have been prevented. The authorities, in fact realised quite early during the War that any attempt to prohibit such contacts would be an ostrich-like policy. They, therefore, very wisely decided to choose the lesser of the two evils—to authorise prostitution and to maintain a strict hygienic control. And they proceeded to organise military brothels with military directness and precision.

In France, brothels re-opened immediately after the re-occupation of the towns which had fallen into the hands of the Germans. The proprietresses of these hotels were not only granted every facility for the safe conduct of the new prostitutes but the government undertook also to supply them with women. Prostitution became, as it were, "a department of the supply services." The combatant was supplied with women in the same way as he was supplied with tobacco, alcohol and other luxuries. The Government's interest in this matter can be realised from the following quotation taken from a circular issued by Georges Clemenceau to the brigade commanders :

"Will you let me have, within ten days of the receipt hereof, the following information :

1. The localities that may come within the sphere of your command in which troops are stationed, together with their approximate numbers.

2. The number of brothels already existing

in these localities, together with the number of inmates in each.

Further, will you kindly in conjunction with the civil authorities, investigate:

1. What premises might be suitable for the installation of establishments of this nature. In case no such premises are available, it will be necessary to provide immediately, particularly in the vicinity of the camps, specially constructed barracks.

2. The names of persons who would be prepared to undertake the management of these establishments."

Brothels grew up as if by magic in the military zones of France as in similar areas in every War front. When the British Army took over a section of the line on the Western Front, they did not close down the establishments. Amiens, Lille, Tourcoing and Roubaix were the principal places of officially conducted prostitution. On the Russian front, Galicia knew intense activity and the German-occupied towns of Warsaw and Lodz had whole suburbs of brothels. Brothels existing from before the War were extended and the staffs increased. Agents on behalf of the Government undertook to recruit girls for these brothels. This business yielded fat profits for those agents and they, together with the brothel-keepers, constituted a special class of War-profiteers. Many of them, after the signing of the Armistice, retired wealthy and lived in fine villas as respectable and admired members of society.

But many of these agents became permanent

enemies of society. Many a white-slave trafficker of the present day received his initiation into the mysteries and methods of this trade during the last War under the benign sanction and protection of the State.

How these brothels worked can be gathered from the account given by Dr. Lacassagne in his essay *Guerre et Prostitution* :

"I knew a woman at Lyons, a Savoyard, who is still on the official list of prostitutes, and who had spent more than three years of the War in a brothel at Amiens. This woman, to whom I pay supervising visits each week, is now forty years of age. Her appearance is deplorable. She is toothless, dirty and prematurely aged. She has not a sou left despite the fact that she went through the heroic age of prostitution when the least skilful prostitute could quickly make a fortune. She has given me some interesting information concerning life in brothels during that period.

"The girls rose at eight o'clock. By half past eight they (there were about fifteen of them) had to be at the estaminet, for the British soldiers were at that hour already arriving in crowds from the neighbouring districts where they were resting. Work lasted till midday, was resumed at one-thirty and continued till eight p. m. The clients came into the estaminet one by one, made a rapid choice—for drinking was prohibited—before "going upstairs" paid the fee to the proprietress, then handed the girl her 'little present', and carried out a quick coitus. The British soldiers, like the Americans, were quite

generous, and would easily give 20 or 30 francs all of which belonged to the girl, the proprietress being satisfied with the entry fee, which varied during the War from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 francs. At eight p. m. the house closed down. "Sleeping-in" was prohibited. Then the girls had their dinner, after which they could play cards or write letters till ten o'clock. The next day-the same happened all over again.

"The work, of course, was tiring but very lucrative. Each girl made at least 30 francs per day-gold francs, let it be said. The "good earners" easily reached three thousand francs per week. With so much money a girl could easily afford a holiday during her monthly period, and more often than not she went through the whole of her earnings during the preceding month in eight days, either with or without a male friend.

"And that is why this Savoyard woman, like the majority of her colleagues, must still earn her bread on the streets. About their laborious but opulent past these women have no regrets and no bitterness."

There were people who said that the prostitutes were doing a national and patriotic service: Whether that is true or not, they were at least showing remarkable feats of endurance in the exercise of their profession. The prostitutes could never think of taking a rest as there was always a steady stream of clients during their working periods and the prostitute hardly had an opportunity of having a good look at her very temporary sex partner. Haste was essential owing to the vast number of clients

and it was the prostitute's task that the client obtained satisfaction within the short time allotted to each client. In the essay quoted above, Dr. Lacassagne says : During times of great pressure, some women received from sixty to eighty consecutive visits." This might be an exceptional figure but the fair average was thirty to forty contacts. It is strange that in the majority of cases, this excessive copulation did not cause exhaustion. This was probably because the prostitute's professional activity had become mechanical, a series of reflexes rather than conscious movements.

In this parody of love there was no time for preliminaries of love-play described by Dr. Van de Velde in his "Ideal Marriage." A man had to be ready for the sex-act as soon as he entered the room. He could not detain the prostitute too long on account of business considerations. There were official orders also about the time taken by soldiers in brothels. Here is an example, signed Brissaud-Desmallet, General Commanding the 127th Division:

"Re monopolisation of brothels by *tirailleurs*.

"The General has received a number of anonymous letters from infantry-men and cavalrymen complaining that they cannot get into the brothels, owing to their being monopolised by *tirailleurs* operating in large groups. It is said that the latter stay too long in the brothels causing frequent hold-ups.

"The administrative authorities of the Sarre, as well as the various municipal authorities, are making efforts to increase the number of prostitutes

to a considerable extent. But until the avoidable staffs of the brothels can be increased, the *tirailleurs* must be more expeditions in their diversions. They will receive instructions on the subject." (Italics mine).

Measures were, of course, taken to prevent quarrel and friction in the brothels and sentries with fixed bayonets regulated the queues of soldiers waiting for their "diversions". Writes Dr. La Cassagne : "What a bestial, degrading yet impressive sight. These unkempt men, after so much suffering and perhaps with the prospect of sudden death before them, wanting to experience the pleasures of sexual contact once more."

Dr. Bizard, another scientist who made a thorough study of this subject, states that brothels, in the war zone and near the military camps, carried on work for eighteen hours per day. Military regulations forbade them from keeping open at night. After nine O'clock no visit was allowed. Though ordinary soldiers would not generally run the risk of breaking the regulations, officers had greater liberty and they visited the brothels at night. George Anquetil gives instances of frictions between privates and officers for the favours of particular prostitutes. These stories are too sordid to be retold to an Indian audience. They make a mockery of the vaunted 'Civilization' of Europe.

Of course, there were brothels for the private soldiers as well as for officers. The former showed red lights and the latter had blue lights : and sometimes the latter bore the notice "for officers only".

It is difficult to say in which type of brothels the prostitutes had the better time. In the former type they had to submit to the embraces of the worst brutes. In the latter they were at the mercy of the despotism and nauseating perversions of men who were used to command.

One of the authorities on this subject is Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld. He and Dr. Gasper wrote a monumental book, "*The History of sexual life during the War*". The following is the evidence of a German soldier who was on duty at one of the brothels as described in that book.

"There were sometimes amazing scenes at the officers' brothels. What could we think of our worthy superiors when we saw them smacking the faces of prostitutes, spitting on them and throwing them against the door? How could we respect them after what we had seen, through the cracks in the window shutters, amusing themselves in most peculiar ways with women?

"One night, at rather a late hour, the atmosphere in the brothel seemed to be particularly gay. There was an officer at the piano, hammering out a dance tune. To the rhythm of this music some half-dozen officers in uniform were advancing on all fours, forming a semi-circle. Each officer was ridden like a horse by an entirely naked prostitute."

The same authors quote the following passages from a German War novel by Wilhelm Michael:

"At Lille we had a good time. I had a hundred marks in my pocket. In the Rue ABC some

girls called to us from a window, "Come in, Soldier Boys." We did not need to be asked twice.

"In a small room with furniture painted red we found three girls. They sat down opposite us and were quite staggered when I began to talk in French. They spoke German with a funny Saxon accent that made us roll with laughter.

"They offered us some wine for which they asked ten marks a bottle. I immediately sent Adam out to get five bottles of wine at the nearest pub, and he paid one and a half marks per bottle for it.

"The girls protested that the sale of wine was their only source of profit; it was forbidden to get wine from outside. But that did not worry us and we began to amuse ourselves.

"We pinched the calves of the girls and even other parts. At first they tried to defend themselves. I had taken a fancy to the one with curly hair and plump cheeks. The fool Adam had told her that I was an Adjutant and that turned her head altogether. Without beating about the bush, I asked her how much it would cost to spend the night with her. She whispered into my ear, "Usually I charge twenty marks, but I love you, so you can pay what you like." I then realised that they were common prostitutes and I laughed until the tears came."

In the false name of Freedom, such was the life to which the war-mongers sent millions of their races.

CHAPTER III

WAR AND PROSTITUTION

CLANDESTINE PROSTITUTION

Statistical figures of officially organised prostitution may have an academic interest but would not give a complete idea of the extent of prostitution caused and encouraged by the last War. There were many women who engaged in the profession but evaded official supervision. The increase in this type of prostitutes proceeded on parallel lines with the increase in the number of registered prostitutes. England did not recognise the profession of prostitution and therefore clandestine prostitution caters to the libidinous propensities of England's inhabitants, to which the Government of the country diplomatically maintain an ostrich policy. Bernard Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession* refers to clandestine prostitution as a profession and proves that this had become a problem of English social life even as early as the end of the last century.

Between July 1913 and July 1914, the Paris police tracked down 3201 secret prostitutes. During the first War year, 1914-15, the number was 4000 and in the next it was 4367. A considerable number, it is reasonable to assume, escaped detection. In the city of Lyons, the police, in 1913, arrested 362 secret prostitutes. In 1918, the number was

802—secret prostitution had increased in that city during the War by more than hundred per cent !

These prostitutes were recruited from all classes. As a general rule it may be accepted that these women were driven to it mainly because they had no other source of income. It need not be forgotten, however, that the governments of the various belligerent countries that were directly responsible for organising prostitution behind the battle fronts, must be held indirectly responsible for the creation of a new class of prostitutes on the home fronts. In the former case, the question of morality never occurred to the governments. But the new class of unregistered prostitutes were the result of a high moral pose by the same governments. A woman legally married to a combatant, in all the countries, received a separation allowance, but the woman who was living with him as his wife but without the formality of marriage was refused that privilege. One result of the movement of emancipation of women, early in the century, was this type of sex relationship that meant the pleasures of life without the pains, troubles and disadvantages of a family, avoided by means of mechanical birth control measures. Strangely enough, England was the only exception in the matter of giving separation allowance. In that country if a woman could prove that she had conceived or had children through a soldier at the front, she also got separation allowance. The effect of it was, of course, the encouragement of sexual freedom. Britishers are a practical commercial people and like all Banias, they are moral

poseurs. They can give the go-by to all moral principles, when self-interest is at stake. In the present case, the future supply of cannon fodder was the consideration that led them to support and indirectly to encourage the much-talked of "War babies". We have, therefore, the paradoxical situation that England, posing as the most moral country in the world, by refusing to recognise prostitution as a normal social profession, lent support to its women, during the War, to indulge freely in their sex-appetites if thereby they could only increase the national population. Clandestine prostitution became a vogue in England. In the continent, the same result came from a different cause. The refusal of the governments, from moral considerations, to recognise and support illicit connection between man and woman.

Having been deprived of their bread-winner, and knowing no other respectable way of earning a living, many women of the continental countries became prostitutes.

Another source of prostitutes was created by patriotic sentiments engendered at the onset of the War, when there took place a general relaxation of all social and moral restraints. The intoxication of the first few weeks of the War, when the war-mongers let loose a hypocritical propaganda about the cause of freedom et cetera, led the girls and the women to offer their most precious possession to the 'heroes' who were going to die for such noble cause and therefore could not be denied the privilege of getting a few moments of fleeting plea-

sure. It was, they thought, too cheap a price for such noble ends—Freedom, neutrality of Belgium and what not.

The sex-freedom of those days of war-frenzy was responsible for changing the whole moral outlook of many a girl after her first few sexual experiences, while in normal times she would have become an excellent wife and mother. Such girls furnished a considerable proportion of clandestine prostitutes. While some, having engaged in "War prostitution", after the armistice resumed a more normal life, many took to prostitution as a profession permanently.

Magnus Hirschfeld and Gasper quote Dr. Gaudy, who wrote, "The great majority of these women were novices in prostitution, and all the more dangerous because they were ignorant. Some of them were working girls, refugees from invaded territories, who resorted to prostitution as a means of earning a living. On the other hand, the prolonged separation of husbands and wives, the absence of marital control and constant temptation carried many a formerly respectable woman and girl down the slippery slope, while the men, demoralised by the uncertainty of the morrow and the prolonged sexual abstinence, succumbed to any temptation that came their way".

The clandestine prostitutes operated everywhere, in the streets, in the cafes and restaurants and near railway stations. Dr. Lacassagne says, "The vicinity of railway stations was particularly dangerous. It would be difficult to imagine the

number of soldiers who were infected by women they met at Gare de L'Est and Gare du Nord in Paris. There were hosts of prostitutes there, waiting for the soldiers who were arriving on leave or leaving for the Front".

The Belgian 'estaminets' have become famous in the history of European prostitution during the last War. Those strange establishments are described in numerous memoirs by German soldiers and officers as places where the man in uniform never felt bored. One such in the village of Aisne, near Gand, was the source of great prosperity for the proprietor who was the lucky father of seven pretty girls. The youngest was only fourteen years of age but had nothing to learn from her elder sisters with regard to sex matters, and the young ladies helped their father to amass a fortune.

Belgium and the parts of France occupied by the Germans were full of clandestine prostitution, in addition to officially organised prostitution. This development of clandestine prostitution was not solely due to an increased tendency for vice and debauchery. That did play its part in it, but a great many of the women were reduced to military prostitution by sheer poverty and need. The prestige of the conquering invaders played no decisive part in these liaisons, though that influence cannot be altogether ignored. In the Flemish areas, the kinship of race and language created a current of sympathy between the German invaders and the Flemish women.

In Brussels, the Belgian capital, there was a

frightful increase in prostitution. Dr. Herms, in his book *Lille Sous le joug* (*Lille under the Yoke*) gives the following description of that city 1915 :

“The destitution of the lower classes is incredible. The streets are full of beggars. In view of this, it is hardly surprising that prostitution should have increased to a terrifying extent. In addition to the large number of coquettes, only the most fortunate of whom had succeeded in escaping to Paris, and the kept women whose “protectors” had gone to the Front or escaped somewhere, there is a whole army of unemployed girls or girls earning starvation wages who, driven by sheer want, sell themselves even to the detested Germans. The bars, cinemas, cafes etc. are crowded with these creatures and the “man hunt” begins at midday. But after eleven o’clock, when all catering establishments must be closed and only a single cafe is allowed to remain open till midnight, this army of women floods the streets, and they pick up soldiers and civilians without much ado. This prostitution is badly controlled. Officially, there are only a hundred and fifty prostitutes in Brussels.”

There is an inclination in England to think that during the last War the British soldier, at least if he belonged to the “better class”, kept himself clean. Those who, like this writer, saw army life at close quarters, will have no hesitation in saying that this was far from being the case. The British soldier or officer, no matter to what class he belonged, was neither better nor worse than his enemy. Lest we should be accused of anti-British preju-

dice, we reproduce here a passage from General Crozier's book "A Brass-hat in No man's Land", to which we shall have to refer often in course of these pages :

"The sex question played a large part in my training syllabus both of officers and men. By June 1915, we were away from Ireland. The water divided the married men from their wives. The young officers, mostly under twenty years of age, were, for the first time in their lives, far from the influence of home. Brighton was close. In the case of officers, London, Brighton, Eastbourne and other resorts offered inducements of which the uninitiated boys of Belfast had seldom heard, let alone experienced.....Why not have a fling and enjoy the pleasures of sexual intercourse while the chance was there ? As for the men—the other ranks—it is a fact that prostitutes and loose women always follow the big drum. The more big drums there are the more prostitutes abound. There were a lot of big drums in England and France in 1915.....Of course, I regarded the matter entirely from the point of view of efficiency and casualties. There was not much good teaching the men to be good soldiers, if the prostitutes or highly placed amateurs frustrated our efforts....I was able, by arrangement with a medical officer, to ensure that every officer, N. C. O. and rifleman was instructed and had access to disinfectants after indulgence in sexual inter-course, and that many of the girls and women had opportunities afforded them of similar facilities, free of charge."

And General Crozier continues :

"Some may say that in making arrangements for the limitation of venereal diseases in this manner, I was condoning, encouraging vice. I appreciate that point of view ; but I would remind them that we are at war, fighting for our lives and *War breeds vice and venereal. One is corollary of the other.* The abnormal life, the shattered nerves, the longing to forget, if even for one brief moment, the absence from home and the inculcation of barbaric habits in our manhood, tempered by the most beautiful acts of heroism, unselfishness, sacrifice to duty, even unto death, lead directly and inevitably to the path of free love on a large, elaborate and ever-expanding scale. *My job was to provide food for cannon and good food at that. Far better to eradicate the cause—war itself—than to build up false hopes that it can be waged in any other way than by brute force and brutal means.* I go so far as to say that free love in discretion for many of the celebrities of both sexes, engaged in War work between 1914 and 1918, was as inevitable as the rising and setting of the sun". (Italics mine)

The above is a complete answer to the prattlings of the churchmen referred to in the first chapter of this book. Twenty-five years intervened between the last War and the present War. During this period, books like that of General Crozier and a cart-load of novels, memoirs and autobiographies of ex-soldiers, had been published, the pages of which, one and all, indirectly cried out against War as an institution. The proverbial shortness of

public memory is the foundation on which all capitalist war-mongers generate war-frenzy from generation to generation.

I shall close this chapter with a quotation from General Crozier again to show what Army life was in the days immediately following the Armistice:

"I journey to Brussels and Cologne—but before departure I talk seriously with my colonels. "The men have evidently gone woman-mad", I say, "The venereal sick-rate is mounting. Many women must be diseased. I hear the Germans let loose diseased women out of prison the day we arrived.....As the army is now returning to England by degrees, it is essential that so far as is possible, we protect the women at home by returning their men clean. You must lecture your men on the subject and provide every convenient and reliable means of protection and sterilization. I will see the Mayor about the detention of the women and their treatment and segregation.

"At Brussels is an orgy of vice in which many British soldiers join.

"The high-class prostitutes of the German Army are taken over by the officers of the allied forces ;

"And what about Cologne ? There the servant girls in hotels, half-starved, lacking the ordinary necessities of life, and even unused to simple crusts,sell their bodies for half-loaves of bread, in order that they may take to the aged and young in their homes the staff of life."

CHAPTER IV

WAR AND PROSTITUTION

INFANTILE PROSTITUTION

The full story of prostitution in War has not yet been told. The most horrible, the most tragic and the most far-reaching in effect on race-morality and race-development is—infantile prostitution, which was the special gift of the last War to European society. Air bombardment and artillery bombardment of cities left many children homeless, parentless or guardianless and destitute. Implacable necessity, therefore—the fear of starvation—drove young girls, little more than children, to sell their unformed bodies. And not orphans only. Many of the poorer families in bombarded cities or those who had to evacuate from War zones, were reduced to such abject poverty that they had helplessly to see their children enter into this infamous profession in order to earn their bread. This is how capitalist rulers take charge of those whom they do not immediately require as—in the words of General Crozier—“food for cannon”.

I cannot do better than quote here the poignant words of Messrs. Dubois and Fischer in this connection :

“Throughout this work we have endeavoured to set down the facts as we know them without exaggeration and without comment. Sometime it has been

very difficult to restrain our anger and indignation, but in writing of the young children who were, during the War, obliged to submit to the filthy and brutal embraces of all comers, we feel that *there is nothing in human language that could adequately express the cold fury that blaze up in the heart of every decent man and woman, not only against those who frankly advocate war, but also against those who preach that war is justified.*" (Italics mine)

Here is some evidence of this disgusting aspect of prostitution during that much-advertised *War to end war* :

"An artisan living with his family near Paris was called to the colours. . His wife was left behind with a large number of young children, the eldest being a girl of twelve. This girl tried in vain to obtain employment as a messenger-girl or nurse-maid, in order to relieve somewhat the stark misery of the family. In the end, the mother herself undertook to find work for her daughter. She said she had, in Paris, a distant cousin, who was the mother of three girls, and who would gladly take the children into her service. The mother took the child to Paris herself and advised her to behave herself and to obey her mistress. The work would not be hard ; she would have to do a little housework and wait upon the three girls.

"Of course, the latter were not sisters, nor was the "distant cousin" their mother. The house was simply an unsupervised brothel, the address of which was passed on by one officer to another in confidence. Apart from household work, the child had to "see

life" as her mistress put it, and after a sort of probation period of a fortnight the mistress, in agreement with the mother, decided "to make her work."

"Innocence is always at a premium with debauched men. One day, when a male visitor asked her what the little girl was doing at the house, she offered to sell her to him. Fearing, however, that during the act of defloration the child might scream or getting frightened try to run away, thus depriving her of a handsome profit, the mistress had a talk with the child, promising her a nice new dress if "she behaved properly with the gentleman". She told the child not to cry out if he should hurt her a little, as that would only increase her pain.

"The little girl, in her innocence, believed everything she was told and behaved as desired during her encounter with the brute. From then on, while preserving her innocence of mind and her childish manner, which always attracts debauched men, the child became one of the profession".

Horrible, but true. You can condemn the mother. But she could not possibly have sent her child to a brothel but for the War. There were, however, many other cases in which little girls were driven to prostitution by hunger.

Messrs. Fischer and Dubois say in this connection—"It would be impossible to imagine anything more tragic than the prostitutes with child-bodies, who retained their innocence of mind even amid the abominations of their physical existence. The contrast between the essential purity of these children and their debauched lives was the most

bitter aspect of the Great War".

The case related above had a curious sequel worthy of being underlined by sociological workers. An officer took pity on the girl, rescued her from the brothel and made her his mistress. A child was born from this connection and when the man was demobilised and became a civil engineer by profession, married her. The girl, however, was unable to overcome her vicious habits she had acquired in the exercise of her profession. She had learnt, from her childhood, to regard the sexual act as an insignificant part of one's moral life and so if she was offered anything which she particularly coveted, she would at once lie down with any man. The remonstrances of her husband failed to inculcate in her a moral sense, after her childhood experience.

In Belgium small girls of twelve could frequently be seen dressed up like an adult, accosting German soldiers with the words—"Monsieur, pour un livre de pain !" ("Sir, for one pound of bread !")

Along with infantile prostitution another profession developed side by side during the years 1914-18, which was also an equally serious social evil. There sprang up a large number of infantile procurers and procuresses due mainly to the development of clandestine prostitution. Generally, young boys between the ages of eight and twelve were sent out on the streets to find clients for their sisters, cousins or aunts. These children did not, of course, comprehend the ignominious nature of their work and did

it in a playful spirit. It was not unusual to find children of different families competing with each other and to brag as to who succeeded in procuring the largest number of men per day. Here is a quotation from that well-known War novel by Robert Graves, "*Good-bye to All That*."

"But now we did a route march or two through the French countryside and that was all, except for fatigues in Havre at the docks, helping the Army Service Corps unload stores from ships. The town was gay. As soon as we had arrived, we were accosted by numerous little boys pimping for their sisters. "I take you to my sister. She is very nice. Very good jig-a-jig. Not much money. Very cheap, very good. I take you now. Plenty champagne for me?"

Some of those little pimps acquired such expert professional skill that they could recognise a client at sight. The War gave them an excellent opportunity to be trained into a profession which, after the War, became a lucrative one and the League of Nations was compelled to have a department for its check. I mean the White Slave Traffic.

Infantile prostitution flourished in particular on the Galician Front, among the poverty-stricken Jewish families, and clients were recruited from among the Austrian officers. A little boy would approach an officer and, in spite of the difference of language, mutual understanding was quick. Some of the unconsciously tragic little boys did not even bother to utter any word to their clients. They made a sign (thumb inserted between two fingers) conveying the sex-act which was sufficient for the client to

understand what was being offered.

There was a large number of such little boys in and around the Dhurumtolah Street and the Chowringhee corner in Calcutta, who would make the above sign to men dressed in Khaki. They served as procurers for Anglo-Indian clandestine prostitutes. They might be in flourishing business even now for all I know, as Calcutta is a centre of military life at present.

Though Galicia achieved unenviable notoriety in this respect during the last War, the story was the same at Lemberg, Lodz, Warsaw and other towns of what was afterwards constructed into Poland. This country under Pilsudski carried on such an extreme form of Jew-baiting that the traffickers in white-slave found it a paradise for the recruitment of prostitutes for exportation to South America and other countries.

We shall close the recital of this nauseating subject with a quotation from the memoirs of a German officer.

"I was walking along a street in which there were few buildings.....Suddenly I saw a wizened, half-naked little boy detach himself from a group of children playing in the roadway. The boy, who cannot have been more than ten years old, came along and followed a few paces behind me. I turned round several times and each time my eyes met the sad gaze of that little boy. Thinking that he wanted to beg for alms but was too timid to do so, I took out my purse and gave him a coin. The child then came up and murmured Mr. Officer.....I

know.....I know.....you are looking for a girl. Officers always want a girl. I am going to take you to one. Just follow me.....she is thirteen years old.....A pretty girl.....My sister."

"I heard the patter of bare feet behind me. I stopped in amazement.

"You must come with me, Mr. Officer. My sister is very pretty. She's a beautiful little girl—and it's only five marks."

"I forgot the war and a fierce rage rose within me at this moral degradation."

Prostitution, open, clandestine or infantile, is not the least of the moral degradation which is brought about by War. Commercial war-profiteering creates a class of new rich which, power-drunk and money-inflated, becomes a danger to all decencies of life in society. Woman's freedom movement that emancipated her in Europe early in this century, was fully exploited by the financial vampires that arose out of an Industrial economy proving that in spite of her social emancipation, woman is yet a willing slave of the male part of society due to her sex-urge which is an uncontrollable biological factor regulating her mental make-up.

In fact, industrialisation, under capitalistic economy, sees to it that wage-earners are always kept in a condition verging on destitution. In the name of a "high standard of living", even the better paid, intelligent labour class, comprising the middle class, are subtly made to live beyond their means. A "higher standard of life", therefore, is a cause of eternal economic bondage of the major

part of a country's population. Economic "Wants" create the soil for sex-immorality among women. Fine dresses, cinema, golf, tennis, riviera, radio and all the other elements of a "high standard of life" form the economic foundation for social vice among women.

Countries governed under a capitalistic economy, therefore, tend to create a large number of destitutes among the labouring and also the lower middle classes. Recruits are, also easily available from a large number of unemployed and destitute women. Advantage was taken of their destitution by the nouveau-rich war-profiteers for the satisfaction of their lust. Emancipation of the woman, socially, is one reason of sexual freedom leading to prostitution among the women of Europe but it is not all the reason. Albert Londres, who made a first-hand study of the conditions of White Slave Traffic concludes his book "*The Road to Buenos Ayres*" with these words—"The foundation of prostitution is hunger. Never forget that for a moment. If hunger did not exist, there would still, of course, be women for sale, as long as there are men to buy them. And the world will come to an end before the half-world does; only, the number of prostitutes would be less by eighty per cent. There would be left only those who are willing not those who must."

CHAPTER V

EFFECT OF PROSTITUTION ON SOCIAL HEALTH

It does not require much imagination to realise what the effect of such large-scale prostitution was on the health of soldiers. Even in normal times the danger of disease from prostitution is great, how great can well be indicated by the following quotation from Forel, the great sexologist :

“If it is considered that the sexual organs of women include deep hidden cavities, a thorough examination of which is not possible, in spite of all the knowledge and all the modern instruments at the disposal of modern medicine and if, moreover, it is considered that owing to certain unnatural practices that are common among prostitutes, the mouth of a prostitute may as well be infected and that no part of a prostitute's body is immune, it will be easily understood what a terrible danger of infection is represented by the sewer of sexual pleasure that is the object of public commerce, particularly when it is remembered that syphilis is extremely infectious.....

“It is not possible to place complete reliance on the medical examination of prostitutes. The object of the compulsory medical examinations is to eliminate from circulation the diseased women and to compel them to undergo hospital treatment. But those who know the facts are also well aware that

such treatment is illusory. Within a short time every inmate of a brothel becomes infected.....

"It should be noted that the brothels also present another immense danger—the arithmetical progression of the mutations in sexual intercoursesuch women increase the danger of infection with venereal disease as a single infected woman is sufficient to infect countless clients."

The sexual chaos of the Great War caused venereal disease to burst the limits of professional prostitution and its usual clientele and to engulf whole populations. In the journal of the Paris Academy of Medicine for 1916, Prof. Gaucher wrote .

"It must be understood that the confusion of mind caused by the War has upset somewhat the usual notions of morality. Men who formerly were faithful to their wives were suddenly separated from their families and knew that they were constantly exposed to the danger of sudden death, so they forget the care they had exercised in time of peace. Infection with venereal disease follows from these easy encounters with women whom these men would have rigorously avoided in civil life. On the other hand, the wives who were left to themselves, not infrequently with insufficient financial resources, forget themselves so far as to replace the absent husbands temporarily. In these *circumstances, which are peculiar to a time of War*, there are countless opportunities for infection with venereal disease, apart from professional prostitution. It is true that the professional prostitutes still play an important

part in the propagation of venereal diseases, and more particularly syphilis ; but it appears from the results of interrogation that in a great many cases, the disease has been communicated to them by any sort of women who were only casual prostitutes, and had not been prostitutes before the War, sometimes even by married women, the wives of the men in the field, who were given only trifling sums, and often nothing at all.

“It is this relaxation of moral restraint, inevitable at times of War, this abandonment of all sexual prudence, that is the cause of the increase of syphilis since the War. And, indeed, *syphilis is on the increase not only among the soldiers but also among the civil population.*” (Italics mine)

The authorities in all the belligerent countries realised the gravity of the situation and set themselves to combat this danger which menaced the entire social structure and, what was more important to them at the time, the efficiency of the armies in the field. Doctors, Sociologists and patriots were all concerned for the future of the race but the last category of people were concerned with the immediate peril, defeat in war as a result of wide prevalence of venereals among the fighting troops. A French official circular dated 3rd December 1915 and signed by one Gallieni, read as follows :

“It is to be feared that the inexperience of life of young soldiers and the temptations to which their age exposes them from the procurers who abound in garrison centres may favour the spread of venereal diseases. In addition to the social

dangers that would result from this fact for the future of the race, the individual injury would be no less grave as regards the present or future physical fitness of the infected soldier and the progress of his military training.....It will be the task of the commands to take all suitable measures, jointly with the competent civil authorities, to suppress and repress clandestine prostitution round the barracks, as well as cafes where the employment of women of bad moral character may serve as an attraction for customers."

Gonorrhœa, like syphilis, weakens the body even in its first stages and makes the soldier unfit for long marches and other heavy tasks. Physical resistance diminishes resulting in demoralisation. The authorities, therefore, had to carry on a War against venereal diseases also. They were thus in a vicious circle. On the one hand, they had to set up brothels behind firing lines to keep up the fighting morale and on the other hand they had to take precautions against demoralisation due to diseases contracted from these brothels. The rate of infection among soldiers was something terrific—as can be learnt from reports supplied by doctors. Dr. Bizard wrote :

"I heard from an artillery captain that one of his men brought a prostitute to the post. Out of twenty-four soldiers who manned the post, twenty-two had to be evacuated owing to venereal diseases, all contracted from this wretch."

It must be remembered that, at the outset, when the authorities had to organise brothels for the armies

they did not take sufficient precautions against infection, due perhaps to their ignorance. When they did take them, the diseases had spread far and wide and even the hygienic regulations framed and put up in every brothel were hardly observed, nor were supervisors appointed to see that they were in practice observed. We know that during the present war, clinics have been opened to give soldiers prophylactic treatment and training. It is impossible to say how far they are successful and how many take advantage of such clinics. It is on record that during the last War many soldiers, after their experience of conditions in the battle-front, deliberately tried to contract venereals so that they might be invalided home. Saint Mande in his realistic book "War, Wine and Women" gives examples of such attempts to get out of army life.

"In spite of precautions, the evils of venereal diseases spread far and wide in all belligerent countries. Dr. Gauchier in an essay on the problem of venereal diseases in the French Army wrote :

"Among all classes of society the standard of morality has deteriorated since the beginning of the War, and both venal and free prostitution has increased to a very considerable extent. In Paris alone, the figure for clandestine prostitutes in 1913-14 was 3,211 and during the corresponding period of 1914-15, it had increased to 3,907.....According to available statistics says Dr. Ravant, from 19 to 25 per cent of the men contracted syphilis and these figures do not include hereditary syphilis."

Syphilis in fact became a problem of European

social life just after the War and in every country research workers devoted themselves to find out an effective remedy to combat this disease. Eventually the discovery of an effective remedy was made in Germany and now this disease is not looked upon with the same dread as before. Though it is said to be cured by a course of salvarsan treatment, it is a moot point yet whether or not this disease, once contracted, leaves some permanent effect which is likely to be transmitted from one generation to another.

The following quotation from an article by Georges Levy, which appeared in *l'humanite* in 1923 will indicate the extent of the incidence of venereals in Europe :—

“Syphilis, with tuberculosis and alcoholism, is one of the worst scourges that are today afflicting France. In Paris, before the War, 20 per cent of the men were, according to Fournier, infected with syphilis; in 1914 there were, according to Dr. Gauchier, thirty syphilitic men in every 100; in 1916, a third or half of the men were so afflicted; in 1917 the figure was two-thirds. According to Dr. Haricourt a third of the population was infected with syphilis before the War. In the department of Dr. Gauchier, between 14th August and the 31st December, 1915, there were 793 cases of recently contracted syphilis cases among 4912 civilian and military patients.

“Syphilis shortens the life of the sufferer at least by four years.

“It causes 6 per cent of the total mortality,

which amounts to about 800,000 per annum. It plays a part in causing abortions and premature births; it influences dead births, which between 1911 & 1914 numbered 34,000 for the entire population of the country and between the years 1915 and 1919, 20,000 for 77 departments that had not been invaded (out of 90 departments). Prof. Pinard in his clinic attributes 40 dead births in every 100 to syphilis. The disease influences the general mortality of children upto the age of one year. Twenty-two per cent of babies suffering from hereditary syphilis die before the age of six months."

According to German statistics compiled by Professor Blaschko, 58.1 per cent of infections of soldiers were due to working women, 21.3 per cent to prostitutes, 12.2 per cent to middle class women while 8.4 per cent were of unknown origin. As regards the incidence of venereals in the different armies of Europe, this was estimated to be as follows :

Germany 2.5% ; France 4.2% ; Austria 6.1% ; Great Britain 17.4%.

The record, therefore, seems to have been held by England which was regarded formerly as the most "moral" country in Europe. At first the British authorities did not do anything to combat this disease. But as the War continued they were compelled to take note of it.

At first people advocated chastity. Here is a note from Justin Godard, Under-Secretary to the Minister of War in France :

"In reality there is only one efficacious way of avoiding infection with venereal disease, and

that is not to expose oneself to infection. Chastity is only ridiculed by imbeciles. Therefore, keep yourself intact and healthy, so that you can found a family or increase it upon your return."

But chastity was a thing of ridicule in the Armies. Even outside armies, many enlightened people also did the same. Sexual abstinence was not considered a desirable article and it was summarily rejected, without anyone caring to consider the advantages or disadvantages. Dr. Poursey was one of the protagonists of sexual abstinence and he undertook a lecture-tour among soldiers. This is what his experience was :

"When I spoke about the dangers of drink, its connection with the deterioration of military discipline, as well as with the deterioration of the standard of morality, affirming the duty of chastity, the respect due to women; to wives, the duty of founding a family—there was a burst of crazy laughter, and there was an uninterrupted flow of coarsest allusions and mockery."

The preachers who themselves never experienced the horrible life in the trenches were the last persons to realise how useless their exhortations were to men who lived in the midst of dirt, filth and terrible scenes of death that developed a peculiar psychology of desperation among soldiers. This is very well explained by General Crözier in his book, already referred to, "A Brass Hat in No Man's Land" :—

"It is not reasonable to expect the youngsters to keep the trenches for England intact, and their

chastity inviolable at one and the same time. *He who hopes to wage war without wine and women is living in a fool's paradise*, for there are no half-measures in war, try how one will....

"How have the mighty fallen. But as the mighty hold equal blame with the opportunists for the presence of war in our midst, they can hardly complain when their sons and daughters are bitten." (Italics mine.)

The military authorities, realising the futility of it, did not advocate or enforce sexual abstinence. They imposed fines and penalties and also encouraged them to report the least symptom. This writer, as an accountant in the army, knows that in the British army, the personnel lost their daily pay and special pays during the periods they had to be in hospital on account of venereal diseases. It must be remembered that the uneducated, primitive type of man that formed the majority of the personnel of the fighting units, regarded venereal disease very lightly. Many soldiers, again, after a few months of experience of the battle-front, considered venereals to be a lesser evil and deliberately contracted them. Dr. Poursey says that it was a novel experience for him to find men infected with venereal diseases to be immensely pleased and satisfied with themselves.

The authorities took care to see that the married men infected with these diseases did not return home, before they were properly treated. But these diseases were more often contracted behind the firing line where clandestine prostitution

flourished and thus many married women got the disease from their hero-husbands back home on leave. Infection with venereal diseases within the bonds of marriage was not always the work of the husband. From the records of depravity existing among some middle class women, one need not be shocked to be told that very much more frequently than imagined, the husbands were infected by their wives.

In course of her chance encounters with men, a woman was bound to come across infected men and, through sheer neglect or enthusiasm or ignorance, would get the infection which she would communicate to her husband. The majority of the wives, however, were more cautious than their husbands and it has to be admitted that the majority of infection with venereals in conjugal life came from the husband.

Those who worked in the military hospitals during the Great (!) War still remember with dread the thousands of men who were the victims of the terrible scourge of venereals, which was one of the most frightful aspects of the War.

Dr. Poursey, who has already been quoted, writes—"The sick and wounded I saw in the course of my six months propaganda tour through the hospitals and nursing homes taught me that the sick and wounded of the War were not the most unfortunate victims of the War. *The most unfortunate victims of the War were the 300,000 syphilitic men, the 450,000 sufferers from gonorrhœa and the 400,000 tuberculosis men who were demobilised in 1919.*" (Italics mine).

A symposium on the consequences of the spread of syphilis in France during the Great War was published in 1923 in the *L'Oeuvre* and we shall close this chapter with a quotation from it. Incidentally, this will indicate one of the causes of the quick fall of France in the present War.

"The danger must be proclaimed publicly, in a loud voice.

"Before the War 40,000 men died per annum in France from syphilis.....Since the War, the figure for France had been 85,000 victims.

"And perhaps the most tragic aspect of the situation is the fact that it hits little children most cruelly.

"Out of the 36,000 babies born dead annually, 50 per cent are the victims of hereditary syphilis.

"And in all the maladies of babyhood in enteritis atrepsy, tubercular meningitis and ordinary meningitis, convulsions etc. the influence of syphilis can be traced. As regards the children who escape death, they become physical and mental degeneratesPeople do not know what syphilis is costing the country....."

It cost France her Freedom in 1940. Petain was right, however much war-mongers may blame him for the surrender.

CHAPTER VI

THE EROTIC BASIS OF WAR AND WOMAN'S RESPONSIBILITY

The purpose of the present work is to record and analyse the history of sexual life during the Great War in Europe from 1914 to 1918, with a view to prove that the claim of the European people to be "civilised" is a presumption. Before giving further details of sexual life during that War to end war, I propose to explain that eroticism is considered to be one of the sub-conscious motives of war. This writer is not putting forward any new fad of his own but is only recapitulating the opinions held by medical men and scientists of Europe.

It is not being suggested that eroticism is a direct and deliberate causative factor of war. We find in nature that during the mating season certain species of animals fight for the possession of the female. In human history, also, wars have been fought the cause of which, directly or indirectly was the possession of a woman. Some of the best epics of the world have been written around such wars. But there are other evidences to support the theory.

It is a well-known fact that some of the war-dances of savage tribes in Africa and Oceania are lascivious but so were the war-dances of the Greeks. Plato has described the pyrrhic dance which is a combination of heroic gestures and erotic movements.

During the Middle Ages, a knight engaged in combat with other knights mostly for the favours of a lady—in the physical sense of the word—and the favours were bestowed by the lady on the victorious rival, if he happened to be beaten.

Men, who are strictly moral in private life, have been known to give themselves up to unrestrained sexual enjoyment as combatants in time of war. It has been said that "lust for killing goes parallel with sexual lust, which may manifest itself either in rape or merely in reckless promiscuity, for love and death—creation and destruction—are psychologically inseparable allies. In ordinary times the sexual life of the individual degenerates into a weekly or nightly routine, lacking in passionate excitement and novelty. But the subconscious desire to escape from the rut is always present. Therefore many psychologists hold that one of the contributing factors in causing war is a subconscious desire to bring about a change in normal sex-life." (Fischer and Dubois)

The average person may find it difficult to believe such a theory. But however improbable it may appear it cannot be entirely dismissed.

In times of war, the animal in man comes uppermost and those who are responsible for the continuance of war do their best to bring out in their countrymen the primeval instinct of blood-lust. And sex-lust is only the other side of the slate. It is inconceivable that whole nations would throw themselves into an orgy of murder and indescribable horror unless the psychological urge of sex-lust is

pre-supposed to be co-existing with blood-lust. Economic interest, imperialism or even so-called idealisms are inadequate to explain the attitude of the common man or woman towards such cataclysms as the wars that have been or are being fought in the world.

It would be interesting to mention here that the German sexologist, Iwan Bloch put forward the theory during the last War (1914-18) that it was due to the sadistic tendencies of the enemies of Germany. According to him, the large number of murder trials in France was proof sufficient of the sadistic bent of the French people. A nation that could produce a Marquis de Sade, a Landru, a Gilles de Rais, could not but be perverted and blood-thirsty. He described England as the home of the most subtle and cruel sexual perversions, the home of flagellation and masochism. Herr Bloch, however, conveniently forgot the horrible murders and the many cases of vampirism that occurred before the War in Germany. In spite of his want of scientific impartiality, Herr Bloch is not wrong in holding that the savage instincts that cause the peoples of the world to accept the abominations of war are common to all humanity irrespective of nationality or race. A certain degree of violence is ever present in all fields of human relationship.

Spectacles involving cruelty have been a popular feature of European life in all ages. The gladiatorial contests of Rome, the tournaments of the Middle Ages and the bull-fights in Spain today are instances in point. Those who have witnessed

a bull-fight have admitted that there is a dual factor of cruelty and sexual excitement in the enthusiasm of the spectators, specially of the female portion.

According to Freud, this is due to the primeval combative instinct in man. He says that when a chick issues from the egg and grows into a cock, both the chick and the egg cease to exist. But civilised man carries the primitive man within him. Our brutal instincts survive in the subconscious mind. The stronger the control or repression, the greater are the chances of their bursting to the surface when conditions favour.

On the basis of Freud's theories it may be said that "war to the individual means a sudden relaxation of the social and legal restraints that were weighing heavily upon him. Social laws and customs repress our natural instincts, war releases them in a sudden and evil reaction. We therefore find that during a war the primeval instincts reawaken and the accumulation of unsatisfied lusts erupt with murderous energy."

The doubter may pertinently ask the question that if the above theory is correct, then how is it that we find so many individuals to be against war? The answer is that the individual's opposition to war is genuine but the individual's voice gets submerged by the clamour of the masses. The mob, as the psychologist will tell you, cannot be judged as merely a collection of individuals. The crowd is always more powerful but less intelligent than the individuals composing it. The crowd does not contain any critical sense. Violence that would not

be dreamt of by an isolated individual would manifest itself in horrible forms in a crowd.

This explains why in 1914, although hardly any single man in Europe wanted war, it was greeted with wild enthusiasm by the mass mind in the belligerent countries and carried on with grim determination in spite of the obvious horrors and evils.

War, it appears, provides an outlet for latent erotic requirements of man. The cave-man within the human breast is constantly at revolt against the sexual constraints imposed by society. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife" may be a Christian commandment but in Christendom, the concern of each inhabitant of Christendom is that this commandment should not be broken in the case of his own wife. Deep down in his heart of hearts he is always pining for frenzied orgiastic love. According to Freud, the primeval passion must triumph in the end, even though if it be only for a fleeting moment. Certain popular festivals denote a vague recognition of this principle. Freud maintains that from the Roman Saturnalia to the modern carnivals, these periodic events provide a temporary relaxation of repressed primitive instincts. War also serves a similar purpose on a vastly wider scale.

While Professor Galo, the Italian scientist, attributes war entirely to erotic motives and dismisses the political and economic motives as mere pretexts, the German author Fehlinger holds, on the contrary, that war has a repressive effect on sexual instinct. The truth probably lies midway between

these two theories. It is indisputable that the general enthusiasm and fervour created at the outbreak of a war, which are fostered by continuous propaganda; exercise a sexually stimulating effect on most women and particularly on impressionable young girls and women of sensitive temperament.

“The generative organs, particularly in women, promptly react to any emotional upheaval or organic disturbance, and the continuous nervous tension of the first weeks of the War, the mass hysteria induced by imminent prospect of carnage, the wild enthusiasm that engulfed whole nations like a tidal wave, the emotional stress involved in partings from husbands, lovers, brothers and fathers—all combined to arouse erotic desire to a febrile pitch.”

During the last War, England was the only belligerent country that escaped invasion altogether and therefore escaped also some of the more appalling phenomena of fear-induced sexual promiscuity. Not so in France and other countries where sexual virtue became a thing of no consequence. In one French city, the women violently protested when the soldiers quartered in that station were ordered to move. During the first weeks of the War the women of Northern France gave themselves freely to their ‘poilus’ and their excuse was. “The boches may be here at any moment and God knows what they are going to do to us. At least they won’t be the first.”

There is the authentic case of the young woman of Rheims who, having reached a critical point in the sexual act at a moment when the

Germans began bombardment of the city, clung with frenzied energy to her partner and insisted on the completion of the act, though the partner wanted to break away and rush to the cellar.

Air-raids, during the last War, sent people helter-skelter into the cellars and at night in their night-dresses which afforded obvious opportunities. Timid women, under the stress of fear, fell easy victims to any man who happened to be present. One of many instances is the case of the servant girl who surrendered to her master in her panic in the cellar during an air-raid, though she had previously repulsed his advances. It is not necessary to try to prove that fear in women is both physically and psychologically conducive to intense sexual excitement.

In time of war, the senses take command and self-control is entirely eliminated. Complete laxity of sexual morals becomes the rule. War affords women an opportunity to exercise their sexual instinct to the full and the question arises—are women fundamentally in favour of war? In their conscious minds, the women are convinced that they are opposed—and quite sincerely opposed—to war. But deep down in the recesses of their subconscious mind—without being aware of it—they do desire war.

And why?

The established facts of feminine psychology provide the explanation.

In normal times, men live a quiet life in which virile characteristics are subdued, the "cave man"

spirit remains dormant. In war-time the essential masculinity of man is brought out by the hard conditions of military service and a life of reckless courage and physical vigour in the trenches. To a woman a soldier possesses all the qualities which she consciously or subconsciously expects in her lover. Forel, the father of modern sexology, says that admiration of physical strength is one of the principal elements in the sexual attraction experienced by females. Tall, powerful men with well-developed muscles exercise a powerful attraction on all women and, curious though it may seem, particularly on so-called cultured, refined, women.

This contrariness of feminine nature has been skilfully described by Joseph Kessel in "*La Belle du Jour*", a novel that created some sensation on the Continent immediately after the Great War. The heroine, highly cultured and married to a cultured man, seeks sexual satisfaction in the arms of coarse low-class men, always refusing the advances of men of her own class. Victoria Cross, once a favourite author, in her novel "Tomorrow" describes how the daughter of a high military officer in the Indian Army and betrothed to an English officer, nightly visited her father's muscular Pathan orderly whom she mentally loathed but physically hankered after. Some psychologists therefore attribute a fundamental masochistic bent to women who prefer a sexual partner in whom physical strength is allied with a coarse mentality. The warrior appears to be the embodiment of these desirable qualities. He is the "hero" whom women want in their heart of

hearts and without a war there cannot be a warrior.

In addition to the masochistic bent, there is another characteristic in women which arouses in them a secret longing for war. It has been proved that women in general are attracted, by the spectacle of suffering so common during war and so rare in normal times. Ordinarily a woman is too soft-hearted to kill a fly, but during a war they thrill to read about and see the most horrible wounds and mutilations. In war time, women avidly read descriptions of war atrocities. "Women enjoy their role as spectators of war, and the unspeakable horrors they witness or read about give them an erotic thrill.....It is no exaggeration to say that practically all women liked to read such descriptions, that the majority of them experienced some sort of thrill, and that this thrill inevitably contained a sexual element, a greater or smaller degree of excitation, according to individuals."

From ignorance of sexual psychology or, from a reluctance to face facts, many people will refuse to accept the existence of a masochistic or sadistic bent in female psychology. They cannot ignore, however, the feminine love of uniforms. They cannot deny that women are more or less violently attracted by military uniforms. This love is closely associated with the feminine worship of strength. A military uniform fits with the body contours and thus brings out the physical qualities of the wearer. It suggests strength and courage and in the eyes of the women it denotes the hall-mark of virility. In all garrison towns every servant girl has a soldier lover. A great

many women, having fallen in love with a soldier, experience acute disappointment when the husband puts on civilian clothes. This is one explanation why many war-marriages proved to be failures when, after the war, the husbands resumed civilian life. Many such marriages would not have taken place had there been no war to clothe the male partners in the war-attire.

The feminine love of the military uniform plays an important part in encouraging war. It must be understood that it is not my desire to suggest that war is exclusively due to women. The erotic factors mentioned above apply equally to men, but the men are undoubtedly encouraged by their women. When the wife or the sweetheart bids good-bye to her man in khaki going to war, they feel a pride and the wife's dulled passion for her long-married husband is re-incarnated with renewed intensity for the new personality acquired by the husband in uniform. This revival of passion is communicated to the man.

In a large number of novels written after the War, women's responsibility for the last War has been ably described. Here is an interesting passage from the novel "Men at War" written by the Hungarian author Andras Laczko, spoken by one of the characters in the book :

"Do you think that we would've gone if they hadn't sent us ? Do you really think so ? Why, ask the silliest peasant lad why he's so keen to win the Military Cross before he goes home on leave ? He wants to preen himself before his girl, or cut

a dash before other girls, or make the women believe that he's a devil of fellow and get them to sleep with him. That's all it is my friend. We came because they sent us."

During the War women went about singing "We don't want to lose you, but we think you ought to go... ..". They went about distributing white feathers to any apparently able-bodied men who were not in uniform. Before "conscription for the duration" was introduced the wives acted as recruiting sergeants in their homes and drove their husbands to join the colours. Girls were ashamed to be seen in public with their sweethearts if they were not in uniform. Many young Englishmen joined the army under pressure—direct or indirect—from their women. It is impossible to relieve the women, as a sex, from all responsibility for the last War.

"During the last War" wrote Charles Gide, the French author, "women were first to believe the most atrocious imputations against the enemy, and the last to resign themselves to the resumption of relations with the ex-enemy. It might be said that that was the proof of their patriotism. Well, it was the sort of patriotism that enabled millions of women to bear the loss of their sons, their husbands, their sweethearts and to console themselves with the thought that they had fallen on the field of honour. This may be accounted a virtue, but if so, it is very different from the pacifist virtue."

In addition to encouraging the men to go to war, they rushed in their thousands to join in the production of munitions and for years their soft,

supple and delicate hands were employed in fashioning implements of murder.

The writer wants the reader to understand that no attempt is being made here to fix the responsibility for the last War on women alone. Our thesis is that the women of Europe are as much war-minded as their men and their war-mindedness has a sexual basis, in a greater degree than in men. And this sort of war-mindedness is only possible because European society, as a whole, has not yet moved far away from the primitive, barbaric stage.

Therefore, the out-break of the War did not shock the men and women of Europe. They welcomed it as their primeval instincts were liberated from the restraints, reserves and taboos of the past. War enthusiasm burst upon Europe with overwhelming violence and the following chapter will give a description of the wild enthusiasm that followed.

CHAPTER VII

WAR FEVER

When War broke out in 1914, a feverish enthusiasm took hold of the various belligerent nations. Pacifist opinion was swept away by the tide of mass-enthusiasm sedulously incited by a Capitalistic Press. A pacifist one day declaiming loudly in Trafalgar Square against War, would himself join up the next day. The voice of the pacifist was drowned by the war-like clamour of the multitude. Everybody became patriotic and as patriotism demanded the risking of lives, everybody wanted to concentrate the enjoyment of life into a few weeks of existence which he expected to get. In this welter of patriotism the women played their part by not only suffering their men to go but by instigating them to join up.

The timid young women, fainting at the sight of a mouse, were gone. They were bright-eyed, hysterical but not timid nor anxious about their men-folk. The women also were caught up in the avalanche of enjoyments released by war-enthusiasm. The fashionable restaurants of London were filled with fashionable women who felt ashamed to shed tears for the men who had gone to the front or even when the news of death reached them. They showed a remarkable spirit of resignation even though many succumbed to a paroxysm of grief when the news of the death of a dear one was received. They got over the loss of a husband or sweetheart very

quickly and were able to give precise instructions to their dressmakers about the details of their mourning dresses.

Poor wives and mothers encouraged their men to go to war on account of the separation or family allowance that the governments paid. And the pensions after the death of the warriors made them bear their losses with what was then described as fortitude.

George Bernard Shaw in his "The Intelligent Women's Guide to Socialism" says that the women allowed their men to go partly because they could not help it and partly because they were no less bellicose than the men. Many women thought that their men-folk would at least be free from the pangs of gruelling want from which they suffered at home.

There is no record of any organised movement in Europe on the part of wives and mothers to prevent the War. In Belgium, of course, some women of Brussels issued a handwritten manifesto in which they asked their men whether they had done all that could be done to prevent War and demanded, "What have your wives done to you that you should cause them such torture"? As against this, we have the picture of millions of cheering flagwaving, hysterical women singing and shrieking their enthusiasm for war into the ears of a crazy world.

The fact that women had never to experience the grim tragedy of War face to face is one reason

for the fierce unreasoning enthusiasm on the part of the women.

Women became excellent recruiters and the Governments made full use of their capacity for this work. Official propaganda subtly suggested that in addition to honour and glory, War heroes would win the love and admiration of women. Poets also gave metric form to the idea that the man who took part in killing his fellowmen would get women as his reward, while the shirker would be denied their embraces. Here is a specimen of the kind of song used in the recruiting campaign :

What will you lack, sonny, what will you lack,

When the girls line up the street,

Shouting their love to the lads come back

From the foe they rushed to beat ?

Will you send a strangled cheer to the sky,

And grin till your cheeks are red ?

But what will you lack, when your mate goes by

With a girl who cuts you dead ?

Whether any of the women "cut dead" the "slackers" is not recorded. But the tempting sexual rewards so blatantly pictured in the above kind of propaganda were denied to the unfortunate men many of whom came back hopelessly mutilated and therefore physically incapacitated from enjoying them. The cartoonists of different countries did not overlook the ludicrous aspect of this propaganda. A German cartoon gave the picture of women passing a resolution that "no German woman should marry any man who had not died for his Fatherland."

A young woman with a promising smile was the invariable picture in recruiting posters. No one seemed to question the moral aspect of these pictures, even when official posters displayed pictures of women in negligee in suggestive postures. "Women were represented as the just recompense of the warrior." Such is the value attached to her honour in countries where she is supposed to be emancipated. A Hungarian Captain used to exhort his men to be brave in the following words—"Fight like hell, so you get decorated, and if you go on leave with something dangling from your chest, the women'll know that there is something worth while in your trousers as well." Indelicate, you will say. But the Captain was a practical psychologist.

Did the women realise the humiliation of it? Of course, not. They relished the role assigned to them in these campaigns and lent themselves to recruiting efforts with zeal and avidity. Those who, like this author, are old enough to remember what happened during the last War, will admit that Helen Zenna Smith in her War Classic, "*Not so Quiet.....*" drew a true picture in the two mothers who competed with each other in sending their sons to the Front and in obtaining recruits for the Army. A women's organisation in Germany in 1915 passed a resolution that after the War no German women should have anything to do with the civilian Germans interned in England. This resolution was duly conveyed to the twenty-five thousand Germans interned in the Isle of Man. Many of these interned were under seventeen years of age when the War

broke out and they were interned.

Similar resolutions were also passed in other countries against young men who would not voluntarily join the armies. Later on, as the War continued and created a dearth of able-bodied men in many districts, and sex-hunger impelled the women these very women welcomed attentions from the "cowards" also.

In England, before conscription was introduced, popular actresses utilised their sex-appeal at recruiting meetings. This writer still remembers the news banner-lined in the newspapers of this country how the famous screen star Mary Pickford—then young and immensely beautiful—gave a kiss to every man who signed the dotted line on a recruitment form and in one evening it was said she bestowed more than one thousand kisses. In France also, Gaby Deslys offered a kiss and an autographed photograph to every volunteer.

Such patriotic fervour among women was, as was inevitable, accompanied by a relaxation of sexual restraints. Mobilised soldiers had strange experiences. They found that households, from which husbands had departed to the War, were strangely hospitable to them. Wives, probably virtuous before the War, abandoned themselves to the frenzied enjoyment of illicit love, irresistibly attracted by the men in uniform. It appeared as though the minds of women became unhinged and they freely gave their bodies for the pleasure of warriors.

This amorous hospitality of women behind the Front is referred to by General Crozier :

"Many billets are much the same in France. "Why not" they argue, "the War is long, life is short, it cannot be too sweet, let it be as sweet as possible."

"This free love in billets is understandable as a biological-cum-psychological occurrence in the disorderly life of an ordered period of violent upheaval and in itself was fairly safe as the women and girls were generally clean....In the billets the girls see to it that preventives are used for their own dual protection and, in fact, often keep a stock of requisites for purposes of safety and profit. Not so in the towns and cities. There the women cannot keep pace with the demand, with the result that large venereal hospitals are established for men and officers in France and England. In all classes of society at home, from the highest to the lowest, the peace-time barriers are relaxed for the "duration". The habits acquired in the billets of France and Flanders and other seats of War, spread rapidly to Mayfair and White Chapel and all the places in between".

In this initial feminine enthusiasm of War, a distinction must be made for its causes among the upper class and lower class women. The women of the well-to-do upper class, mostly educated according to our ideas, lived an idle life of ease, free from cares and worries. They were anxious to escape from the ennui and boredom of a pampered existence. The War brought no material discomfort to this class of women in spite of a high cost of living. On the other hand, the War brought to them oppor-

tunities of a life of thrills and pleasant experiences. Food, shelter and clothing were not the ordinary cares of her life and if she lost a husband or a lover in the war she bore the loss with what the newspapers described as "heroic fortitude".

In all countries of Europe, such women, having lost one husband, married another, and having lost the second, married a third and so on. There were many women of the "upper classes" who, between 1914-1918, married four husbands in succession. Records were established in all the countries at war of women's repeated performances in matrimony. And it was such records that gave rise to the expression that marriage was "legalised prostitution." Many people in India have used this catch-phrase to pose as modern thinkers without knowing the history of the expression. In Europe, marriage has deteriorated into "legalised prostitution" whereas in countries where widow re-marriages and divorces do not exist that expression cannot be applicable.

Even when she did not marry, the woman of the governing classes, after losing her husband, did not allow herself to suffer from sex-starvation. The scarcity of male did not affect her, as the men of her class generally secured for themselves "cushy" jobs at home far from the rigours of military life and were always available to her. As a great many of these women had influence in the higher military circles, they were in a position to promote or ruin the career of young officers. She, therefore, selected her lovers and if anyone refused

to satisfy her erotic fancies, she could revenge herself by teaching him severe lessons. It is quite useless to give instances of scandals in high life. Cases did occur during the years 1914-18 in all European countries where elderly ladies punished young officers for refusing their amorous advances, by trying to harm their careers.

The case of the women of the lower class was different. During the first days of the war, these were caught up in the general war madness. Even leftists who wanted universal peace before the war became war-hungry and were prepared to destroy their leaders if the latter spoke against the war. Naturally, the women of this class also succumbed to the war hysteria—an attitude which was sedulously fostered by the foul-mouthed propaganda of the press.

The husbands of this class of women were not given safe jobs like "Augustus" in George Bernard Shaw's *"Augustus does his Bit"*. So, these men, after a few weeks of training, were sent to the Front and became the first casualties. The mental shock of these women was negligible compared to the economic problem that faced them after the death of their bread-earners. With the bread-winner dead or away and with inadequate allowances from the State, the women of the lower middle class and working classes had to seek work in occupations which were formerly reserved exclusively for men and for which she was not biologically fitted.

In all belligerent countries the women were praised, as now, for taking to munitions production

work. This and similar occupations, however, placed a terrific strain on her because she was not fitted for such work mentally or physically. Therefore, contrary to her sisters of the leisured class, the realities of the situation soon wore off her original enthusiasm and brought bitter disillusionment. The causes of passing away of the first intoxication were mainly physical and economic.

The women of the war-period have been praised for the "magnificent manner" in which they fulfilled their masculine tasks during that war (as is being done during this). They do deserve praise for their effort to become efficient workers. But the general result was unsatisfactory. In the Central European countries, where women were habituated to farm work, their amateur work did not involve physical strain. But in "civilised" countries like Germany and England the great majority of women were physically and mentally unprepared for heavy work, under-nourished as they were. Often they had to put in a 10-hour day in the hot atmosphere of a factory, in the midst of nerve-shattering clangour of machinery. There was quarrel and discontent along with the exhaustion of the work. Wherever women were at the head of affairs, there was constant trouble with their female subordinates. The last War proved that women were bad supervisors.

So, sheer exhaustion from war work, killed the war enthusiasm of the women of the lower class. Gradually war-mindedness among these classes was replaced by sex-mindedness and the results of sex-hunger will be described in the chapters that follow.

CHAPTER VIII

MANIFESTATIONS OF SEX-HUNGER

(1) WAR-MARRIAGES

A spirit of sacrifice filled the minds of all war-crazy women. Each wanted to do something for the country, to "give her best" to the country. The mother "gave" her son, the wife "gave" her husband to the country. The young girls, the unmarried women, felt a frustration in their spirit of sacrifice. The need to "give" became an obsession and created a pathological condition in the minds of young women. Self-torment became a source of joy. The desire for sacrifice, in the case of women, telescoped into an intense sexual desire and almost became a sort of religious ecstasy.

All sexually mature young women, at this time lived a life of constant excitement. You will hardly find a woman in all Europe during a war, who would show indignation if a man in uniform asked her to sleep with him. She wants to have a soldier lover or husband, and though the chance of widowhood lurked always in her mind that was a condition which did not terrify her. What is considered a catastrophe in peace time, was a matter of glory in war time. Nobody gave a thought to death, which had become a normal part of life.

These psychological factors prompted hundreds of thousands of men and women to rush into marriages which were, most of them, thoughtless

alliances being the result of the intensification of sexual instincts coupled with the woman's sacrificial instinct. These war-marriages were reckless alliances between temporarily sex-crazy females and temporarily heroic males.

This scramble for getting married became a peculiar phenomenon of European society. Even in Paris, where free union between men and women was a vogue, rather than an exception, there was a record number of war-marriages. The Government policy in giving separation allowance only to married wives, as referred to in Chapter III was perhaps greatly responsible for these marriages in France and other countries. Blasco Ibanez in his "*History of the European War*" observes that at the outbreak of the War, "half Paris decided to get married." Soldiers in uniform with girls in their working clothes queued up before the marriage offices and said, "I want to get married before leaving for the front tomorrow." Evidently the thought of marriage was a sudden decision. In some parts of Paris in one single morning, three hundred marriages took place at one Registry office. It was not unusual to see a labourer in uniform, with a woman on his arm who was in an advanced state of pregnancy, with a number of children tripping behind and shouting—"Daddy and mummy are getting married."

(2) LUXURY, LICENSE AND FASHIONS

At a time when millions of men were living like rats in the trenches, exposed to the dangers of lingering death or horrible mutilation,—behind the firing line, perhaps only a few miles away in cities

and towns, the entire population was possessed with a veritable sexual frenzy. Morality and chastity seemed to have fled eternally from European social life. Luxury in women is intimately connected with their hankering for men. Ostentation in feminine attire is certainly based on sexual competition. During the War there was a scarcity of men in the towns. Women, habituated to luxury, were either trying to get lovers who were getting rare or they were struggling to secure lovers to continue to live in luxury. Between sexual immorality and the immorality of luxury, it was difficult to decide which was the cause and which the effect.

During the War, there arose a class of men who helped women in their life of luxury and license. These are war-profiteers. "Most of these people were unscrupulous business men who did not hesitate to speculate on the death of hundreds of thousands of their countrymen and who stayed at home and lined their pockets. Many of these profiteers were men of inferior intellect and education, but found themselves in possession of fabulous fortunes. Having none of the refined tastes of men born to riches, these people spent their money in vulgar ostentation and debauchery."

It was the demands of debauchery of these men that led to the establishment of *night clubs* where drink-flowed and sexual orgies were the rule. Tea-dances, dinner-dances and supper-dances, in camouflaged cafes and restaurants were places where women adventurers of the upper class obtained their thrills and got off their ennui.

"Respectable" women sold themselves at these smart and expensive establishments and their buyers were the war-profiteers. At this time, the dividing line between prostitution and free love vanished. A considerable number of women who were thought respectable, or who considered themselves respectable before the war, threw themselves into the general stream of debauchery. The war profiteers ate and drank and debauched not only with avowed demi-mondaines in the cafes and clubs that sprang up, but also with the women of the higher strata of French society, whose husbands were soldiering at the Front. The furs and jewellery these women wore could not have possibly been paid for by their husbands. They paid the price themselves in the manner in which it is possible only for women to pay.

Such a life for middle class women was not a strange one in Paris. It existed in a limited scale before the War. But the opportunities became greater during the War and the whole society lost itself in the grip of a licentious and riotous living. Even before the war, there were women—the wives of barristers, doctors, artists etc.—whose names and photographs were available in certain secret houses of assignment. During the War, hosts of respectable women began to share the pleasures of the profiteers in the night life of Paris. It was difficult at this time to say where prostitution ended and mere license began. The position was much the same in London, but in Paris, being nearer the Front, this sexual frenzy was intense and wide-spread.

It is interesting to note here that, in search of sexual gratification, it was the women who took the initiative, the weaker and the so-called passive sex made advances to the stronger and active sex. The fear of scandal had disappeared. On account of the scarcity of men, there were rivalries between the women for the possession of a male. There were subtle intrigues as well as open clashes in the cafes and restaurants. Shame, reserve and modesty seemed to be non-existent in European society. Women were reckless in giving publicity to their sexual miseries.

As few males were available, the market-value of the male-ness of a man reached peak prices. Coloured men from Africa and Asia were hot favourites and the woman literally fought for them among themselves with all the wiles and the venom so natural to woman. A negro from Martinique became the lover of a Frenchwoman whose husband was at the Front. After a few weeks, this woman noticed that her swarthy lover's ardour was cooling off and he was frequently absenting himself from her. On investigation, she found out that the man had transferred his favours to a pretty young girl of seventeen, a country girl from outside Paris. The deserted woman of mature years determined to break off the new affair of her lover. She wrote a letter, as if purporting to come from a hospital, addressed to the Negro soldier. This letter said that it was mere superstition for him to think that sexual connection with a young virgin girl would cure his syphilis and he should submit him-

self for proper treatment. This letter the woman placed in the girl's letter-box, as the girl was living in the same apartment house as the Negro. A woman's natural inquisitiveness prompted the girl to open the letter, as it was meant. The effect was immediate. The frightened girl vanished from the house next morning without leaving her address. This is only one example of the methods that women resorted to in their struggle for the possession of a male.

This constant competition among women for conquering and holding their lovers was reflected in the fashions of feminine dress of the War period. In order to increase her chance in the sex-struggle, she had to look more beautiful than her rivals. She had to make herself as seductive as possible. Her primary sexual characteristics endowed by nature, had to be displayed to the best advantage in order to attract the male moths. So all the resources and ingenuity of dress-makers were exercised to bring into bold relief the attractive features of the feminine body.

First of all skirts became short, gradually reaching up to the knees. The excuse that this was to save cloth for soldiers' uniforms was specious. The true reason was that short skirts left the calves and, to some extent, the knees uncovered, thereby attracting the gaze of men to those seductive portions of feminine anatomy. Uncovered calves and knees with occasional glimpses of the thighs are among the heavy artillery in the arsenal of feminine coquetry and, at a time when they needed all their wea-

pons, they would not allow them to be hidden. . Even today, we see European and Anglo-Indian girls going in tongas constantly pulling at the ends of their skirts in futile attempts to cover their thighs, the more mysterious parts of which threaten to become exposed at every lurch of the uncomfortable vehicle. Male-catching devices in dress, which developed out of sex-necessity of women at an abnormal time during the last War, became a normal feature of feminine dress in European society, even after the War had ended.

As the general principle of feminine fashions was maximum revelation with suggestive concealment, the gown was shortened with "V" fronts and absolutely open backs. It is unfortunate that mimicry of anglicism has led Indian educated women to ape European fashions in their dresses also, the purpose being sexual suggestiveness. The underwear of the women also changed from white to loud colours which, under transparent upper garments, seemed to be, and perhaps were, designed to whet the male appetite.

This "exhibitionism" extended also to mourning dresses. The husband may have died in the trenches torn into fragments or after untold agonies from gas-poisoning, but the widow of a hero fallen in the "field of honour", showed her respect for domestic and social honour by parading her sex-appeal in purposely-fashioned mourning costume.

It was Otto Weininger, the celebrated but short-lived German sex-psychologist, who propounded the theory that femininity and masculinity co-

exist in all human beings. Truly feminine females and truly masculine males are rarely met with. Probably it was on the basis of this theory that Professor Magnus-Hirschfeld said, that war-time feminine fashions reflected a simultaneous tendency on the part of women towards femininity and masculinity. Because, at the time that more and more of the feminine body was being revealed by discarding superfluous clothes, high boots,—giving the women a boyish gait—also became a vogue and a military cap, perched saucily on the head lent a suggestion of swaggering virility to her face.

From the standpoint of psychology, there were unconscious reasons that motivated women to strive for an appearance of femininity on the one hand and to adopt masculine dress on the other.

The over-emphasis of their sexual personality by exhibitionism in dress was due to (1) shortage of men and (2) intensified sex-hunger. The soldiers on leave—who were the lovers of women in general—hungered for femininity and the women tried every means to give them what they wanted.

As regards masculinity in the dress of women, more than one reason may be ascribed to it. Firstly, a large number of women, being engaged in factories and other war work, formerly done by men, had professionally to adopt masculine dress which helped in the unconscious acquirement of masculinity in temperament. Secondly, the lure of the military uniform led others to adopt military dress because it lent a certain prestige and importance to the wearer. This tendency may be compared to the tendency of

certain soldiers in the trenches and internment camps to dress in feminine attire.

Finally, there were certain women who, on account of the scarcity of males, replaced the male in sexual intercourse. The problem dealt with in that famous novel "The Well of Loneliness," describing the life of a female sexual invert, was not so much a problem as it was one of the results of the unnatural sex-life during the Great War.

Not only fashions in dress but fashions in make-up were also brought to aid feminine coquetry. In post-war Europe, beauty-culture had become a normal part of women's life but it had its origin during the War.

Before 1914, respectable women used a little face-powder and that never in public. Lipstick, rouge and painted eye-brows were in vogue among women of easy virtue. A woman who appeared in public with these make-up, was at once placed as a prostitute. But within a few months of the outbreak of hostilities, women of Western Europe, of whatever class, adopted the most extraordinary devices to freshen up their complexions, brighten their eyes and to paint their lips a vivid red colour. At the very beginning, of course, some women objected to the practice on grounds of propriety, but gradually in the end all women acquired the habit. They realised that make-up was an important factor in the hunt for men for the reason that when passion impels, the male eye is unable to discern the false from the genuine, the natural from the artificial. The result was that everywhere in public, in draw-

ing rooms, restaurants, cafes, trams and buses, the woman would open her vanity bag and apply paint and powder at all times.

In pre-war days, make-up was associated with prostitution, as it was a weapon in the feminine man-hunt. When the vogue spread among all women, the self-appointed guardians of public morals raised a howl of protest. In France the protest was not so violent as in Germany and in England, and in the latter countries the clergy was most loud-voiced. They described it as a danger to morality and appealed to the womanhood of their respective countries to avoid a fashion that was inevitably leading to moral disintegration. But the women took little notice and manufacturers of beauty-aids prospered exceedingly.

In Germany and Austria-Hungary, the morality campaign was accentuated by anti-French propaganda. The women were warned against apeing Paris and "to throw off the yoke of French dress-makers." The prestige of the Parisian dressmakers, however, was proof against the reptilian hatreds of war and German women continued to imitate the "marvellous" inventions of the Rue de la Paix.

The craze for luxury and the psychosis of gaiety engulfed all the belligerent countries. All were governed by an inexorable natural law that exacted sexual immorality and debauchery as part of the price of war.

No belligerent country could boast of being free from vices due to sexual license. Immorality and depravity were not peculiar to any nation.

English men and women who were on war service indulged in sexual immorality as freely as the Germans and the French. It is necessary to ram home the fact that Allied men and women during the war were no less depraved than the enemy.

In the book already referred to by General Crozier we read :

"I hear coarse remarks in clubs, on the leave boats, in Boulogne hotels and in London, made by middle-aged rogues dressed up in uniform which would horrify the parents of these young people, if they knew. At a certain house in London, officers in uniform were found dancing, retiring, drinking and love-making with girls in government employ, under quite extraordinary circumstances. War brings all these things in its train....."

The young people referred to in the above passage were the V. A. D.'s and W. A. C.'s.

In the same book, General Crozier relates how he met at Boulogne a woman friend—apparently one of the few who kept their heads—who related to him the conduct of the men and women in that town :

"This place (Boulogne) is now a hot-bed of iniquity", She adds "There are some very good sorts here of both sexes, but the morals of many of the men have disappeared while the *girls have become war-mad and sex-mad*: in many cases these go together and free love is easy. There are so many rooms they can go to.....Last week three girls and three boys from the line took one room in a hotel, all got drunk, and stayed there for some hours. The girls had to be in by ten, but they went to sleep, so the

girls were late. There was a row, but nothing came out. I know, because one of the girls left a purse under her pillow and I went straight to the room and got it for her. The boys were still in bed. *Immorality is as prevalent in Boulogne as death in the line*.....But remember, many of the men and women at home are having the time of their lives.....I was on leave ten days ago before my husband embarked for the East. We stayed in an hotel in London. We saw two girls from here with wedding rings and temporary husbands with them, also from here. It is inevitable. It is war."

Though life in the big cities was what has been described above, the smaller towns and villages were by no means free from the social and psychological effects of life on the "home front". In the absence of the menfolk, the peasant women had to do most of the agricultural work, but they were not free from the obsession of sex. The infidelity of the peasant woman cannot be said to be sexual perversion but the expression of a natural instinct the satisfaction of which with the legitimate partner had become impossible. A very striking example of the situation is obtained from a petition which the women of a Hungarian village sent to the Austro-Hungarian High Command. This document is significant. It ran :

"We the women whose husbands are away at the Front make this humble application to the High Command of the Army. We know very well that the High Command needs our husbands, but as they cannot come back to us, we beg you to send

us some blind soldiers to our village. These poor men will not be able to see the women with whom they will sleep, and that is why we beg the High Command to send us at least two or three of them."

The simple women must have thought that as the blind men could not see, their conception of modesty will be satisfied and the gravity of their adultery will be reduced !

(3) SEXUAL EXCESS AND DRUG HABITS

When the libidinous instinct of human beings vents itself in a mass form in society, it brings in its train in an epidemic form other attendant vices—one of which is drug-taking.

Morphine and cocaine are the two most important drugs from the sexual point of view, so far as Europe is concerned.

An eminent French medical man, Dr. Albert Chapotin thus describes the erotic effects of morphine in his book '*Le Defaitistes de L'Amour*' .

"It is perhaps on the genital system that morphine produces powerful, and at the same time the most incoherent effect.

"It causes a deep and contradictory perturbation in the reproductive function and in the acuteness of the sexual appetite.

"The abuse of morphine rapidly produces a sexual itch that fills the victim with the poison of unwholesome fervours. The physiological over-activity caused by the morphine is communicated to the whole organism, and creates a permanent and imperious sexual stimulation in both sexes.

"In the case of some women this stimulation manifests itself mostly in the form of a chaste delirium, a state of idealistic reverie but in others it is different. Dr. Guimbail describes one of his women patients in whom the slightest contact, even the touch of a finger, was sufficient to produce an orgasm. "I experienced" said this patient, "a strange voluptuousness and, at the same time, the most atrocious pain, and as soon as I obtained satisfaction of this desire, it began all over again.

"Some practitioners maintain that morphine at all ages promotes sexual capacity.

"It is an undoubted fact that the occasional use of morphine stimulates the carnal appetite. But the excitation of the genital functions is more cerebral than physical and repeated use eventually leads to weakening of the sexual desire to the point of incapacity and barrenness.

"As regards chronic morphinism, the inevitable penalty is frigidity in the case of men and the most serious derangement in the action of the organs in women."

Cocaine, known as "Snow", is also an erotic stimulant, and, for the same reason as morphine, is used by prostitutes. It acquired a disastrous degree of popularity during war years. While its action lasts, the addict feels cheerful and the world appears to him as if seen through rose-tinted spectacles. The tragic happenings and sights of the War therefore, favoured the spread of cocaine-habit. It is the true modern drug. It is easy to carry about and convenient to take, at any time of the day, at any

place, without attracting anybody's attention.

Though cocaine-habit became endemic in Europe during the war, the traffic began there in or about 1910. At first it was secretly sold in perfumery and tobacconists' shops. Police vigilance sent it further underground and hand to hand peddling was the method of distribution. In cities like Calcutta, the big and well-decorated betel shops are mostly cocaine sellers. A sniff of this drug is used in "pan" and sold to addicts who know the code-word for such special variety of the betel-preparation. A famous prostitute named "Batasia Bariwalli" became fabulously rich as the head of a cocaine-smuggling gang between the years 1910-16. The traffic was carried on in Calcutta as in Europe under the very eyes of the police. In Europe, though the police was corrupt, it was not so as in this country and so an eternal war was waged between the police and the drug smugglers who showed extraordinary ingenuity in evading police vigilance. A tobacconist in Montmartre kept cocaine in his back room in the hollow legs of his billiard table. It was sometimes offered to customers in a hollow cigar, a fountain pen or a jar of vaseline. A one-legged man was found, when arrested, to carry a dozen packets of the drug in his artificial leg. Musicians carried them concealed in their instruments. Pedlars sold it in pastries, oranges, artificial flowers. It had code-names in different localities. The most common name during the war years was the "White Queen." In fashionable society of the idle rich, it was a matter of snobbery to parade the habit.

Men carried the white powder in beautifully designed snuff-boxes and offered it to one another. Those who did not use it pretended to take it in the presence of friends and exhibited in public a snuff-box containing some harmless powder.

Physicians are of opinion that cocaine acts on men as an aphrodisiac of short duration, while on women it produces hypersensibility of the generative organs. Some cocaine-addict women have stated that when under the influence of the drug, the most complicated acts of debauchery failed to bring about their satisfaction.

These contradictory effects on masculine and feminine natures, naturally led to scenes of appalling lewdness at cocaine parties. The man's sexual capacity being exhausted long before the woman is satisfied, the latter would naturally, due to paroxysm induced by the drug, attempt with maniacal frenzy to rouse her partner, in whom nothing but a cerebral urge remained.

During the War, every 'smart' dinner had cocaine for dessert. It is easy to imagine how these dinner parties of the "Smart set" ended. Though after a certain age, cocaine cannot revive sexual capacity, it does stimulate erotic fantasy. More than one writer has recorded the case of an old American woman. She was immensely rich, sixty-three years old, gave magnificent parties and sumptuous dinners with cocaine after the dessert. When the cocaine would take effect, she used to open her dress and holding her withered, flabby breasts, which was tattooed all over, on a porcelain

plate, she would frisk about the room exhibiting it to her guests.

The slaves of cocaine lose all mastery over their senses, and cocaine addicts resort to the most odious sexual practice imaginable. And certain vicious instincts become fixed in cocaine addicts. The eminent physicians Courtois-suffit and Giroux write :

"He may acquire a taste for children or old women, or he may become homo-sexual. He is a maniac bent upon unnatural practices. The most terrible consequence of cocaine is the gradual moral disintegration of its addicts. Perversion develops with the greatest intensity in the sexual domain. The sense of modesty and shame vanish first and even the sense of jealousy completely disappears. A veritable Othello, once he becomes an addict, may see his wife prostitute herself without feeling anything more than the detached excitement of a spectator. Promiscuity becomes the rule. Degrees and differences are wiped out and social barriers are swept away by the power of cocaine."

The most striking example of the degradation of drug maniacs is provided by the authentic record of an American, who was a large-scale smuggler and dealer in cocaine in Paris during the Great War. Being the son of an American general, he had influential friends and therefore for a long time escaped arrest. During the years 1915 and 1916 he carried on his trade in Paris. He was not only a drug trafficker but was also an addict himself and a sadist of a vicious type. An eighteen-year-old dancer,

Olga Morton by name, fell under his influence and suffered inhuman brutalities at his hand. Eventually, in order to escape from him she inflicted a cut on her arm and was thus able to get herself removed to hospital where she described the acts of origiastic brutality upon her.

Cocaine orgies were as frequent among respectable and educated men and women as among addicts and traffickers, and many a war widow sought solace in stupefaction and in the arms of any man who happened to be nearest to her at such moments. Though the drug habit was widely prevalent in Paris, Berlin, Vienna and Budapest, London cannot claim immunity and during the war cocaine parties in the West End of London were no rarity. The scandal of the Chinaman smuggler—"the Brilliant Chang"—who supplied drug to London's West End, came to light after the War, but his activities must have begun during the war years.

Wounded soldiers acquired the drug habit. Doctors and nurses to whom drugs were accessible took to them to escape the effects of over-work. Many nurses were caught selling drugs stolen from the stores of the military hospitals.

"And the drug traffickers" says a writer, "having reaped a rich harvest between 1914-18, never relaxed their efforts to encourage the drug habit in as wide a circle as possible, so that where there was one drug-addict in the years immediately preceding the war, there are ten today."

CHAPTER IX

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT GOES WEST

The following paragraph appeared in the "By the Way" column of the Amrita Bazar Patrika, Northern India Edition, dated February 2, 1944 :

"Divorces in England averaged 750 yearly, nearly 50 years ago. During the last War, the figures rose to between 3000 and 4000 every year. The present war has witnessed a further increase in divorces to 12,000 yearly. Does it not throw a lurid light on the so-called Western civilisation? Does it not show the sanctity which Britishers attach to the matrimonial sacrament?"

Marriage as a sacrament has long been relegated into the dustbin of chimeras by the "democratic" societies of Europe. Marriage contracts, like international treaties, are scraps of paper that can be and are torn into shreds as it suits one of the contractual parties.

The emancipation of woman in the 19th century was the first stimulus to divorce but the last Great War brought on the avalanche. In the first chapter of this book, reference has been made to the opinion expressed by the *Edinburgh Review* (1916) that the "sexual act would soon have no more significance than a game of tennis." This phenomenon in social psychology must be regarded as quite natural because in all the belligerent countries,

during the war years, there was a great discrepancy in the supply and demand ratio between males and females. The war killed millions. Hundreds of thousands more were sexually incapacitated. And the millions of soldiers sent into the battlefields were kept "out of circulation," thus disturbing or, rather, destroying the equilibrium of the sexual market. The supply of girls and women was hugely in excess of the demand for them and this glut on the market led inevitably to the reduction in their value. Women became cheap as a sexual commodity—they could be had "on request."

I am not blaming the women. Sexual solitude was forced on the women for months and sometimes years at a time when society was sexually intensified. The normal education of women in "civilised" Europe discards the superstitious worship of ideals connoted by characters such as Sita and Savitri. Such ideals are said to enervate the personality, warp individuality and promote the enslavement of the women to the sex-desires of one man, and are fit ideals for the Hindu barbarian. In the educational systems of European societies inhibition of the demands of the senses finds no place. Therefore, if the women left behind during the War developed enormous sexual appetite, deprived, as they were, of males for months at a stretch, we can hardly blame them. We must also remember that the febrile, crazy atmosphere of the War helped such development. Sexual deprivation, plus the war atmosphere, unbalanced even the most timid temperaments.

It is easy to preach and moralise that when the men-folk are away risking their lives in defence of "democracy and freedom" the women must remain faithful to them. It is easy for the men to expect that during their absence, no other man should exist for their wives and sisters in the sexual sense. Nature, however, seldom takes account of sermons, theories and opinions. Women are only human and it is but human for her to want to satisfy her sexual instincts. No one has a right to condemn the woman for acting humanly, not at least those, who create conditions under which that humanness finds opportunities for thriving. It requires generations of racial inhibition to enable women to immolate themselves by jumping into a fire rather than fall a prey to the lust of victorious armies of an enemy.

It must be admitted that many wives and sweet-hearts remained faithful to their men throughout. They only can tell what they suffered during the long months and years of waiting in unrelieved physical and mental agony.

Generally speaking, if a soldier on leave returned home unexpectedly without previous intimation, there was a risk of his finding the wife in a compromising situation. Actually, unexpected returns from the front resulted in a very large number of divorces in all the belligerent countries.

The soldier-husband would return and find his wife in another man's arms, or pregnant by another man or perhaps nursing a child which could not have been his. At such times it was entirely a

matter of social class, education or temperament whether he killed some one or merely created a scene and left. There were extensive Press reports in those days dealing with the trials of soldiers—both officers and men—who had, in circumstances mentioned above, killed or seriously injured their wives' lovers.

When a woman is caught by her husband in the arms of another, there is seldom any chance of explanation. During the war there must have been many cases where the woman had succumbed to a force stronger than herself and in such cases, beyond the mere physical act, there was no change in feelings, in cases, for example, where the woman had sold herself to obtain food for her children and herself. Given an opportunity to explain many husbands would have held their hands. Such cases were not rare. Many years ago, a film was shown in which a soldier returning home found his wife in the arms of the butcher's assistant. That was the only way the poor wife could obtain food. That story was no exaggeration.

In the Central European countries, where the blockade by the Allies created famine conditions, infidelity due to the want of food was frequent. Such prostitution is certainly far more terrible than professional prostitution adopted from choice. In such cases whosoever deserved condemnation, it was not certainly the women.

Incidentally, it may be mentioned here that during the War many women committed or attempted to commit suicide from remorse after an act of

adultery which they allowed to prey on their minds. Mostly, however, the women created a defensive argument for themselves. They came to the conclusion that an affair, whose sole object was the satisfaction of the senses, could not affect her conjugal fidelity. There was no question of transferring her love to a stranger, it was merely the temporary physical replacement of an absent husband.

This immoral evolution of the woman began from the first months of the war.

The war constituted a trauma of a particularly violent kind for the feminine mind. The psychological reaction in each case depended on the power of resistance and the extent of involuntary sacrifice in the individual woman.

Here is the opinion of Dr. Hirsch, the famous Berlin gynaecologist :

“The careful observer has ample opportunity to study the peculiar, frequently pathological, changes through which the feminine psyche has been passing under the sledge-hammer blows of the war.....The complete upheaval by the war in the sexual sphere has seriously affected the feminine nervous system. The sudden enforced sexual abstinence has driven many women, whose sexual life had proceeded normally in marriage, to self-abuse, with its nervous after-affects, and sometimes even to perversions, among which Lesbian love plays an important part. Many a case of adultery, many a “crime of passion” arising from sexual excitement, and many a love drama might be judged with more understanding if these facts were taken into consideration.”

One phenomenon, as the result of war psychosis, was the unexpected frequency of cases in which women passed their menstrual periods. Professor Dietrich coined the word "War amenorrhœa" for it. "The complaint afflicted women who were obliged to perform hard physical labour. War amenorrhœa appeared after the outbreak of the War, and continued to increase during the War. Professor Miller attributes (in his book—Effect of the war on Feminine organism) war amenorrhœa to three principal causes. Firstly, under-nourishment, which was undoubtedly great in the belligerent countries. Secondly, the sudden change in the mode of life of women, whose social role and work underwent revolutionary change as the result of War. Thirdly, the psychological influence of the War. The news that a loved one had been severely wounded, or killed or taken prisoner—be he a son, husband, brother or sweetheart—caused a shock in many cases which produced a stoppage of the menstrual period. Enforced sexual abstinence was also a contributory factor."

But the other result of enforced abstinence—more terrible in its effect on race-culture—was the almost pathological craving of the wives of soldiers in the field for sexual satisfaction.

This sex-hunger led the women to ignore patriotic considerations and led them to give themselves freely to the prisoners of war. This has been described as unfortunate from the moral point of view. To us it seems, that if war is moral, its natural consequences should also be considered

moral. It is worthy of note that those who blamed women for their relations with enemy prisoners condemned them not so much for adultery as for committing adultery "with the enemy". This is an ironical aspect of mentality created by War.

The relaxation of moral standards was not regarded too severely. Even husbands regarded the infidelities of their wives during their absence in a less serious light than in normal times, except when they caught their wives by surprise. The wives also regarded their infidelities with philosophic calm and without remorse. Adultery during the years 1914-18, was only half-sinful. Conjugal infidelity became so common that it was openly discussed everywhere. Forel, the famous Sexologist, wrote that "during the war, adultery was the order of the day in all belligerent countries, partly owing to intercourse between soldiers of all ranks and prostitutes, and partly owing to the more or less durable liaisons contracted by them all in invaded territories, while their own wives, in turn, entered into illicit affairs at home."

An interesting case of marital indulgence has been recorded by Paul Reboux in his *La Guerre Inconnue*.

When the German Army retreated from French soil some of the women in the reconquered villages bore unmistakable signs of brutality of the temporary conquerors. In one of the villages a woman had not seen her husband since the outbreak of the war and one day the husband returned. The woman fell on her husband's neck and sobbed out the con-

fession of her false step which had resulted in the birth of a child. The husband, being a true soldier and a Frenchman, said that it was all right and that they would bring up the child. Then, bending over the child, he said, "You take after your mother, don't you, my lad, you're not really a Boche." And the child answered, in English, "No daddy."

While adultery was a common phenomenon in all belligerent countries and illicit intercourse became a universal practice, the authorities in some countries accepted this state of affairs with tacit approval. When nations were engaged in exterminating one another, what was the harm, they thought, if the replenishment of cannon-fodder was made in this way ? In Germany there was a brochure in secret circulation. The title and sub-titles of the book were :

"Temporary Marriage

The only means of creating rapidly a new defensive form, and a safeguard of morality.

An Appeal to Women

by Karl Herman Jage."

Inasmuch as the German Government were aware of this pamphlet but did nothing to stop its circulation, it can be presumed that they agreed with its thesis.

Strangely enough, a morality-drive was undertaken by some well-meaning churchmen, journalists and other bodies and individuals. They preached, exhorted and sometimes threatened. The Paris newspaper, *L'Intransigeant*, in its issue of 17th February, 1916, quotes an announcement by the

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military commandant of an Austrian town which said, "I learn that many women whose husbands are at the Front are misbehaving. From now on I intend to publish the names of all women whose culpability is proved."

Generally, however, the whole European Press was full of such scandals and the cuckoldom of the men at the Front was treated with light-hearted raillery. In its issue of 24th January, 1917, the above-quoted Paris journal reported the case of an aristocratic young lady who had given birth to a son, although her husband was a prisoner of war in Germany for over two years. The paper defended the lady by stating that with the help of a friend of a neutral country whose uncle was a bishop in Germany, the lady had succeeded in obtaining a short but profitable interview with her husband in a certain Central European town under the supervision of the bishop. The paper commented that this explanation "was sufficient to satisfy the strictest moralists but the lady was taking unnecessary trouble to explain an event that was considered by many people as quite natural in these days of long separations". One lady had even observed, "I wouldn't disturb a bishop for that."

This was the tone in which adultery was discussed in the Press.

Though the soldiers were indulgent and forgiving towards their wives, many betrayed soldiers, however, divorced their wives. This was more frequent among war-marriages. The female partner of such marriages was seldom constant. If, during the

first weeks of war, there was a mass movement towards marriage, with the end of the war there was a mass movement towards divorce.

This was quite natural. The war marriages were results of sudden passion, contracted during a short leave. In some cases, the bridegroom had to depart after the first night of marriage. Re-unions were few and that also after long separations and did not suffice to convert the delirium of passion into real love.

The moral laxity of women was not, however, the only cause of increase in divorces. It would not be right to lay the entire blame at their doors. Many women remained faithful throughout to their marriage vows. But not so their husbands who were guilty of gross misconduct. The men at the "home front" took advantage of the increase in their sexual value on account of the disequilibrium in the supply of males. Many unscrupulous men exploited the situation to impose on the good faith of respectable girls by entering into bigamous marriages with them. The statistics of war years record numerous cases of bigamy and even polygamy. It became no rarity for men to act the husband in two or more homes. Discovery naturally led to divorce.

The authorities in some of the belligerent countries were definitely guilty of promoting such alliances when children born of a married woman by the husband of another were legitimised by the subsequent marriage of the parties. This was done in France by the law of 30th December, 1915. Such marriages had to be preceded by the dissolution of

the previous marriages. England also followed suit much later.

Another reason for the increase of divorces was the misbehaviour of the men at the Front who resorted to prostitutes or contracted alliances with other women such as nurses, female ambulance drivers or the wives of their "enemies". Women are more forgiving of the sexual infidelities of their husbands than are the latter of the former. If women had been as unforgiving as the men, the number of divorces would have assumed colossal proportions.

A smooth divorce was not always the sequel to marital infidelity. There were tragic sequels as well, specially when the war ended and millions of men began to return home from the grim, tragic and brutalising environments of the battle-fields. Not all of them could be expected to be tolerant or forgiving enough to arrange for separation or divorce. Such men wreaked vengeance sometimes with appalling cruelty and savagery. In 1916, the German papers reported how a soldier, coming home on leave, found his home empty and on enquiry learnt that his wife had placed their two children in the care of a woman and was living with a gigolo. Determined to have his revenge, the husband brought back the wife, pretending to make light of the affair. But at night the shrieks of the woman brought the neighbours who found the woman lying on the floor, with burns on her body and the husband bellowing with rage. It appears that his wife was preparing the meal when the husband tore her clothes off her and forcibly

seated her on the red-hot stove-plate. The idea evidently was to burn the genital organs of the offending woman. Curiously enough, this form of revenge was copied by returned soldiers after the war in many countries. In some countries, the husband poured petrol on the genital organs of the wife and then put a match to the lubricated place.

As long as husbands were unaware of her infidelities, there was neither divorce nor punishment. If she was not caught in the act or if there was no living evidence of her guilt or if friends and neighbours gave no information, the wife generally managed to allay suspicion. Pregnancy was not a great risk, because there was a colossal increase in the use of contraceptions during the war both for legitimate and guilty purposes. But contraceptives sometimes fail. When this happened, the woman resorted to abortion. Illegal operations increased on a huge scale and in every belligerent country there was a large number of medical men who fattened on this illegitimate source of income. No woman who could afford the price of an operation had the least difficulty in finding some one to perform it. Whether it was in the West End of London or in the poorer districts, the number of professional abortionists became considerable in all the belligerent countries.

This was another legacy of the war to end war.

The tale is not wholly told yet. Another result of the attempt to conceal the effects of marital infidelity was infanticide. In the villages, where the moral standard of society lagged behind "civilised"

standards of towns and cities, the women for fear of exposure resorted to this crime. During a war human life is considered cheap and the women had no reason to curb their sudden criminal instincts.

The war denoted a revolt not only against human laws but also against established sexual laws and conventions.

CHAPTER X

EROTIC LIFE ON THE "HOME FRONTS"

The adulterous associations between the women on the "home front" and whatever males were available were exploited by humorists of all countries and the following anecdote is an illustration. This was an authentic case reported in a German Catholic paper "Monika" in its issue of 12th June 1915, in course of an article entitled "One would like to shed Tears of Blood."

In a certain Talkie house, the cinema manager, made the following announcement when the 'interval' came. "I am informed that a Territorial is waiting for admission outside in order to surprise his wife with her lover. I want to avoid a scandal and I therefore request the lady concerned to leave by that small door on the right. She must do so at once, because her husband has already reached the booking office and may now be buying a ticket." At this there was a commotion in the auditorium and as many as twenty-three couples hurriedly left the cinema hall.

The lonely women at home turned to men of all types, classes and ages to satisfy their erotic hunger. The soldier on leave, came first on the list. He was *the* lover. Sometimes he was legitimately so, but only sometimes.

The soldier on leave was the darling of the women at home. The fiance of the soldier became

his wife in fact if not in law. The atmosphere was such that no one could refuse anything to the soldier. It was part of the new morality that engaged couples should consummate their union without the blessings of the Church or the sanction of the State. No one was shocked if a girl capitulated to her soldier fiance.

This extreme popularity of the soldier on leave led many an unscrupulous hero to exploit the situation to derive financial profit from their capacity as lovers. There grew up a body of male prostitutes. In many cases sex-hungry women of the upper classes formed special clubs for the purpose of a supply of vigorous men, and thus provided scope for a new profession for the men.

The following authentic case is recorded by Professor Magnus Hirschfeld. A certain German officer during periods of leave, used to be hard up for money. He used to borrow frequently from a brother officer who seemed to roll in money at such times. A time came when the obliging friend became tired of his constant appeals for loan and while refusing, said, "After all you can do what I do". He explained what that was. The needy officer had no scruples in the matter. He was advised to go home and wait for a carriage that would call for him. He obeyed instructions and was later carried to an address unknown to him. This was a woman's club and here it was explained to him, without much beating about the bush what was expected of him. The women had clubbed together to invite handsome young officers to satisfy

their sexual requirements and paid handsomely for services rendered. In fact a specific name was coined for male prostitutes. It is "Gigolo". "Gigolo"-ship is now a permanent male profession in European upper-class society. The gigolo passes as a paid dance-partner of a woman who comes alone to a dance-hall. In practice he is a paid sex-partner for sex-hungry females. After the armistice, many unemployed ex-officers had to adopt this profession to earn a livelihood.

Soldiers on leave passed "words" to each other. They exacted high prices, well knowing that the women would go any lengths to afford a soldier.

A wounded soldier did not lose his sex-value. A woman felt proud to walk in the street beside a soldier with an arm in a sling. As a rule, a maimed man is at a disadvantage in the matter of courtships, but in the beginning of the war, the opposite phenomenon was apparent. Some psychologists refer to sadism, the pleasure the women take in seeing a man suffer. Whether these psychologists are correct or not, the fact remains that it was a case of perversity when women in certain cases preferred a maimed man to a physically sound, vigorous man.

The following authentic case is quoted from the case book of a doctor. "A woman-patient of this doctor, a lady both by class and culture, had the good fortune to get her husband back uninjured at the end of the war. The husband's best friend had been pursuing the woman with his attentions from before the war without success. But this man returned with a lost leg. The pity that his infirmity

inspired in the woman developed into love and in the end she divorced her husband to marry the cripple. She confessed to her doctor that the condition of her second husband was a source of indefinable emotions to her even in her sexual domain." Here is one of those mysteries of the feminine mind which still elude explanation.

Middle-aged men, who in normal times would have had to give way to their juniors, became the objects of feminine desire and rivalry in that chaotic time, because between two leaves of a husband and lover the woman had to find a temporary lover. Old gentlemen, who had become bankrupt in all erotic assets, were surprised to encounter the inviting glances of young and pretty women in cafes, restaurants, streets and other public places. They were even more surprised when they found that they could induce the women without much effort to share their beds. If, in addition to being males, the old gentlemen were rich enough to pay generously, they were snatched up by the women. People were not shocked by the great disparity in age of the couple when an old man led a very young girl to the altar—or simply to a hotel room.

This sort of sexual mesalliances naturally led to sexual perversions, as natural intercourse had to be substituted by all sorts of devices.

Apart from the senile lovers, the women began to initiate adolescent boys of fourteen or fifteen into the mysteries of Hymen. Many grown men of this war owe their first sexual experience to the special conditions prevailing during the last War.

Some of the timid boys resisted but feminine cunning in most cases overcame their resistance. Boys of tender ages—of fourteen to sixteen—may experience erotic dreams, but if confronted by a woman as an erotic object, he experiences fear more than any other thing. Even his curiosity would recede before the terror that overwhelms him at the too daring touch of a female hand. But the lonely woman of the war-time, tormented by her sexual hunger did not recoil from the delicate task of initiating tender boys into the mysteries of Eros.

"There is on record a case in which one woman, of the higher middle class in a small town of Lower Austria, carried out the initiation of a number of boys. Some school boys of the locality, all aged about fifteen, wanted to form a sports' club. They wanted football and other sports accessories. Each had to pay a subscription but the question of money was a problem. Few of them had any money at all. Then one of the boys gave a discreet piece of advice to his best friends. It appeared that the wife of the local Notary, who was away at the Front, liked young people and welcomed visits from school boys. She gave them tea, talked with them and gave them money to buy books. Instead of books this money could of course be used to buy football and other things. It was only after two years that the boys discovered that they were all lovers of the Notary's wife. By patience and generosity she had overcome their initial timidity. From each she exacted a promise of secrecy and to each she had sworn that he was the only one. The timidity and

sense of shame of the boys was the best guarantee against scandal and for a time, at least, she was not disappointed in her calculation." ("Class 1902" by *Ernst Glaser*).

Here is another story being the confession of a boy mentioned in the same book.

"At first she made me afraid by the way she kept on stroking my hair and pressing her leg against mine when I was sitting near her. One day, when the corn had been sheaved, she sat down by me behind a sheaf of corn, took my head between her hands and kissed me. I never had a kiss like that before, and I can't tell you what it felt like. I felt like laughing and crying at the same time. She hugged me and passed her hand down my body in a strange way. She said that if I kept very quiet she would give me a ham when I left. So I did not move, but you and Minchen came back sooner than she expected and she let go of me.

"From that day on she took me with her to the garden every evening and gave me a lot of current wine to drink. She was very tender but not the way a mother is. I was always thinking of the ham, and did what she wanted.

"Auguste's face was very pale on the pillow....
....I was crouching before him. I was afraid.

"But soon", continued Auguste, "I suddenly began to like what she was doing with me. I was feeling stronger when I hugged her. At such times she always used to bend back a little on the bench so that I had to bend over her and hold her very tight. She shut her eyes, laughed in a strange way

and pressed her body hard against me. In the end I liked it very much; I even forgot all about the ham.

"Today she took me to her room. When you and Minchen came up, she suddenly got up and put out the light. She pulled me into her room and undressed me. I did not know what to do; but suddenly I found it impossible to think of anything. I ran to the bed and hugged her. She drew me to herself closer and closer.....I took her into my arms and squeezed her very hard.....I felt ten times stronger and her skin smelt so nice. Everything was terribly nice....."

"Then he opened his eyes and began to cry. The tears rolled silently down his cheeks on to his chest.

"Auguste," I cried terrified, "Why do you cry if it was so nice?"

"He stammered—"When I did it the second time, she sighed harder and harder, so there was something savage about it, then suddenly she cried, "Georges! Georges!" and she seized me with all her strength and bit me on the shoulder."

"Georges?" I asked.

"Yes," said Auguste, suddenly ceasing to cry, "That's her husband's name. He hadn't been home on leave for over a year."

.....Then Auguste said, so loud as if he wanted the whole world to hear:

"It wasn't me she loved. The women don't think of us when they embrace us. We're only ersatz."

We are all familiar with rape of women by one or more men at a time. Here is given the story of a brutal case of seduction, almost amounting to rape, which occurred in Silesia. This was recorded in the *Zeitschrift fur Sexualwissenschaft* (The Revue of Sexual Science) in its issue of April, 1917.

"The hero was a farmhand aged sixteen years. In that farm there was a convalescent soldier aged thirty and two girls one aged twenty-five and the other twenty. The older girl was carrying on with the soldier and the younger one assiduously pursued the boy. The latter was shy, as he had no sexual experience and the girl's advances were unsuccessful. The girl, constantly witnessing the amorous activities of her more fortunate friend, became crazy with sex-hunger. One day; when the two girls were in the fields with the boy, they raised their skirts in order to show him their sex organs. Then they threw themselves upon the youth and took off his trousers. The younger girl began to play with his member, in order, as she said, to see whether "it was any good". She finally succeeded in bringing about an erection and then forced him to serve her. The boy later gave notice to leave the farm. The brutal initiation had disgusted him." (Taken from "*Sexual Life During War*" by Fishcher and Dubois).

While there was a great scarcity of men in Central European countries, in the towns and cities of Allied countries there was a continual influx of soldiers from various lands, speaking different languages and wearing different uniforms. The new and exotic has always a powerful sexual attraction.

This explains the Anglo-mania of the French women during the last War. The Parisienne experienced a new thrill when she captured a hefty, blue-eyed Scotsman wearing the kilts and gabbling in a strange language. The British and the Yankee soldier also came in for their share of attention from these ladies. The erotic significance of their uniforms was enhanced by the fact that they were strange uniforms. This love for strange uniforms sometimes created amusing incidents such as the following, described during that time in the *Vie Parisienne*:

"A very pretty young actress employed at a small theatre near the Opera boarded a train for Villiers. Opposite her sat a big, handsome young man, wearing a Khaki-coloured uniform, with leather leggings and belt and a peaked cap with a thin silver cord running round it. There were wide gold stripes on the sleeves of his coat.

"The young lady was "patriotic" and a great flirt. She smiled. There was a response and a mute dialogue began, in which the eyes of the young lady said, "I like you" while the eyes of the young man registered mute acknowledgment.

"At Wagram Station the man rose. The girl followed him. On the platform she accosted him. The conversation was brief.

"You are a British officer?" the girl asked him.

"Not at all" replied the man, "I'm an hotel porter."

The young lady blushed furiously and made herself scarce."

During the Great War, the prisoners of War became a problem to the authorities on account of the fascination they exerted on the female section of the countries in which they were interned. In the great cities, they were inaccessible to the women. But in the villages, they formed practically the only male adult population. In the majority of cases, they were not even confined in concentration camps, but they were quartered in the farms where they were employed as agricultural labourers, the farmers having been drafted into the army.

The first attitude of the women was one of repulsion. The newspapers had given lurid description of the atrocities and barbarities of the enemy. They were monsters, the brutes who had strangled babies, the satyrs who had raped the women and cut off their breasts. They were enemies.

But in the end, the women realised that, after all, they were men, males.

Theorists have tried to explain this unpatriotic perverse inclination of women of all countries for prisoners of war. The famous sexologist Wilhelm Stekel propounds a curious theory :

"Woman," according to him, "is the enemy of man, whom she combats by every means at her disposal. This war between the sexes is intensified by international war. Woman then makes every effort to exploit the situation into which such an event places her to score over the opposite sex. The great upheaval involved in war is used by her as a sort of spring-board. That is the explanation of the enormous progress of feminine emancipation during

the last War. On the other hand, on the basis of the truth that the enemies of our enemies are our friends, the prisoners of war represented in the eyes of the women, the enemies of their most harmless enemies, the men of their own country. The sympathy they showed for the prisoners of war was only a manifestation of an obscure instinct impelling them to find allies in the war of the sexes. Although these allies also belonged to the hated sex, they were not at least permanent rivals in the struggle for existence, like the men of the same race."

This is a very subtle and ingenious explanation, too subtle indeed for us Indians to accept it. Besides, facts cannot always be explained by subtlety. A far simpler explanation of the phenomenon has been given by Voberg and is acceptable as applying to a certain class of women. According to him "Erotic associations with prisoners of war were made mainly by abnormally impulsive women who had no serious occupation. In any case, those who saw the women shower their favours on Ashantis, Bedouins, and Senegalese, and other foreigners, cannot be surprised to find that enemy prisoners of war should exercise an attraction on certain women. The male of exotic aspect with a different odour never fails to impress the females. He brings a new note into the monotony of life, and the novelty, the out of the ordinary he represents is sure to produce a stimulating effect."

But the actual reason was the primitive one represented by the scarcity of men, which was greatest in the villages where the peasant women

succumbed to the virile charms of the prisoners. During the first two years of the war the prisoners were young men under thirty, of a fairly high standard of physical fitness and sometimes handsome and smart. The women very soon discovered that these "enemies" were not the savages which the newspapers painted them to be. They were as good as their own men-folk both at work and at other more intimate performances.

When two persons of opposite sexes work together and feed together, an intimacy is bound to develop between them. If they are both craving for sexual satisfaction, they are bound to unite because sex is a sphere where differences of race, language or territory do not exist. It goes without saying that the German and French prisoners of War considerably contributed to the increase of the enemy country's population. After the war, many permanent alliances were the result of the intimacies during war. Constant companionship with a prisoner of war often alienated the affections of a wife or a sweet-heart from the husband or fiance whom she had not seen for four years.

The authorities in all the belligerent countries, specially in Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia imposed severe penalties on women who formed sexual relationship with prisoners of war. In Leipzig in 1917, there were twenty-five convictions of such women in three months. At Innsbruck an association was formed for pillorying such women and in Germany the sentences of imprisonment varied from two to three months.

England was the only one of the belligerent countries where no such legislation was passed because the enemy prisoners there were few in number.

Apart from prisoners, the foreign soldiers exercised a strange fascination on women. The women of London lost their heads about the Anzacs, just as the Viennese lost theirs when they saw the West Africa negroes, called Ashantis. The most cultured women fell in love with coarse males for no other reason than the exoticism of distant origin or strange and, not necessarily, attractive appearance. In spite of their reputed coldness English women were no exception.

A certain British officer who was sent out to Palestine, after the war, for the military organisation of the country, took out his wife with him. She was extremely beautiful not much above thirty years in age. Men of her own class everywhere fell for her. She herself, however, fell for a handsome Arab boy whom she one day saw in the streets. On the pretext of the boy's education, she took the boy under her protection and brought him to England when her husband was recalled home. The true role of the boy was well-known in certain circles in London. Young Ibrahim, as his name was, developed neuresthanias in London and ran away to his native country where he began to earn his living as a shoe shine in the streets of Jaffna. (Taken from "Sexual Life During the Great War.")

During the war, began in Paris the vogue for dance halls with negro Jazz bands. French women

lost their hearts to the African black men not even mainly because there was scarcity of males. The fascination was due to the reputation of the negroes for untiring sexual vigour. According to women who have experience of the matter, they are capable of many successive repeat performance of the sexual act. Others say that they have extraordinary sexual endurance, being able to prolong the act for hours. Whatever that may be, the fact remains that negroes were hot favourites with the French women and the fact is proved by the many chocolate-coloured children with curly hair born in France and other white countries. These hybrid children were of course the cause of many domestic dramas. While some of the soldier-husbands, after return from war-front, were prepared to tolerate and treat philosophically the temporary tenure of another white man in his wife's heart, they found it impossible to tolerate coloured rivals. Homes naturally broke up and girls left with living souvenirs of their pigmented lovers could not find husbands of their own race afterwards.

The war, when it lasted, acted as a procuress and helped indiscriminate race-admixture, though its main purpose was international hatred and murder. Such is the paradoxical effect of wars. To us, Indians, this need not strike as strange. When, before the battle of Kurukshetra, Arjun faltered, he put the case against war in the following words to Krishna :

Kulakshyë pranashyanti Kuladharmah Sanātanah,
Dharmë nashtë Kulam Kritsnamadharmobhibhabat-
yutā.

Adharmābhibhabāt, Krishna, pradushyanti Kulas-
triyah,

Strishu dushtāsu, Barshnëya, jāyatë Varnasankarah.

*Gita, 1, 40-41.

"When the race is depopulated, culture tends to be destroyed. When culture wanes, vice spreads among the rest of the population. O Krishna, when vice preponderates the women of respectability become licentious and, O scion of the Brishni dynasty, when women are immoral, the race is bastardised (lit. cross-breeds are born)."

After finishing this chapter, I read in the times of India dated 11th February, 1944, the report of an interesting debate in the Indian Legislative Assembly at New Delhi held on February 9th. I am quoting the report here.

"Do women seduce men ? The Central Assembly's verdict today was that they do not.

"A private bill of Mr. M. A. Kazmi "to punish men and women equally for the offence of adultery" was considered.

"Mrs. Renuka Roy protested and pleaded that until monogamy was enforced it was unfair to bring

कुलक्षये प्रणश्यन्ति कुलधर्माः सनातनः ।

धर्मेनष्टे कुलं कृतस्नमधर्मो भिभवत्युत ॥

अधर्माभिभवात् कृष्ण ! प्रदुष्यन्ति कुलस्त्रियः ।

स्त्रीषु दुष्टाषु वाष्ण्येय ! जायते वर्णसंकरः ॥

गीता, १, ४०-४१

about equality between men and women offenders in adultery proceedings. Bhai Permanand, the prominent Arya Samajist, certified that he never came across the case of a woman seducing a man.

“Amusement was caused by Mr. Kailash Behari Lal who asked for expert advice on sociology before “I can be in a position to have any opinion about myself.”

The fact that the sanest view caused amusement is a commentary on the composition of the “democratic” institutions known as legislatures. Mrs. Renuka Roy’s argument that until monogamy is enforced, the woman has the privilege of misbehaving as a conscious partner in adultery is inconsistent. But, as she is a woman, one must concede to her the privilege of inconsistency. Bhai Permanand, however, showed very commendable ignorance in sexual matters. The fact that he never came across the case of a woman seducing a man certainly proves that he has no personal experience of the paths of adultery in his life. His ignorance is no argument against a biological fact. It appears that those who objected to Mr. Kazmi’s Bill suffered from a confusion of thought as regards the distinction between rape and adultery.

Though this debate does not come within the scope of this book, I am referring to it because this chapter contains the answer to Bhai Permanand’s arguments. Apart from this, ancient Indian literature contains numerous references to the seduction of man by woman. The five Pandavas were born because their mother sought different persons at

different times. The illegitimately born Karna was the product of her incursion into premarital sex-experience with Suryya whom she deliberately sought. Uma trying to break the Tapasya or meditation of Shiva, through the help of Kama, is a beautiful allegory of a woman's failure in her attempt at seducing a strongly spiritual man. A lesser man, Viswamitra, fell an easy prey to Menaka, the mother of Shakuntala. In Rāmāyana, we have Surpanakhā trying to seduce Lakshman and getting punished for it. Rabindranath Tagore, in one of his brilliant masterpieces, interprets the union of Arjuna with the daughter of the King of Manipur as an instance of seduction of a man by a woman. All this proves that the ancient Hindus accepted the fact that women are quite good at seducing.

CHAPTER XI

DRINK AND DEBAUCHERY AT THE WAR FRONTS.

Books, that have been published after the War, give gruesome pictures of the battle-fields, in spite of the fact that War-mongers use the power of the Press to lure people into the death-trap by descriptions of courage, comradeship and heroism. The actual fact is that conditions in the battle-fields were akin to the life of beasts rather than to human existence. Filth, lice and lack of sanitary arrangements created the physical conditions for beastliness. The constant fear of death, the daily sights of horrible mutilation and agonising death coupled with the rigours of a stupid system of military discipline, all combined to brutalize the minds of the men at the fronts. The reader is recommended to Saint Mande's "War, Wine and Women" for realistic pictures of what the horrors of the war were. The name of the book is a very happy one because the three are inseparable. The three compose the Trinity of Destruction for human society.

In the physical and mental environments that life in the trenches meant, the combatants naturally turned to drink in order to deaden the constant mental strain and physical discomforts of trench life. As all European races are normally spirituous in habit, the soldiers turned to wine as the only solace from the ugliness of existence.

Wine, in its turn, completed their conversion into unseeing, unfeeling beasts and that made more suitable as killers as well as for being killed. This was a consummation very much appreciated by the military authorities, for which reason they never tried to repress alcoholism, while they tried to combat drunkenness which led to the betrayal of military secrets. Strong drinks were routine war-ration. When rum was served out to British troops, they knew that the moment for charging across the No Man's Land had come. In the Italian army, the soldiers daily received a ration of strong drink.

British soldiers, both men and officers, used to be considered as champions in the matter of drinks. "Journey's End" happens to be the best war-play in any language and the reader will remember the hero saying that if he left the dug out without his fill of whisky, he would die of fright. Robert Graves in his *"Good Bye to All That"* and General Crozier in his *"A Brass Hat in No Man's Land"* describe the fondness of British officers for alcoholic drinks. When first published, the British public were "unable to swallow the unwholesome truth" and the books were attacked by champions of British character. The controversy that followed revealed that a great many British officers spent their active service in a semi-stupor from drink.

The Germans had a very apt name for strong drinks. It was "Kampfgeist" which means "the spirit of struggle". In the French Army, wine meant 'morale.'

Mussolini has the following in his "War Diary" :

"I cannot understand why the soldiers are served with a daily ration of drink. The quantities are very small, but the soldiers thereby acquire a bad habit. The 'nip' of today prepares the way for the glass of tomorrow. Some men at times succeed in obtaining too much wine and then there is a deplorable comedy. The only case of punishment of which I know was inflicted on my corporal, who drank too much, and was transferred to the interior."

The longer the war lasted the greater addicts the soldiers became and carried the habit back to their civil life at the end of the war. Some writers attributed the defeat in certain battles to the drunken condition of the soldiers. For example, the failure of the German offensive of the spring and summer of 1918 was attributed to drunkenness of the German Army. It may not be true, it may be a post-war attempt of the Germans to explain away their final defeat. The fact that such an excuse could be seriously advanced proves that the existence of the drink-habit in the army was widely known.

It is interesting to note the following facts in connection with the wide-spread use of alcoholic drinks in the German Army. It is a well-known fact that the effective British blockade created a condition of famine, and scarcity of food was one of the causes that forced the Germans to surrender and the Kaiser to quit his crown. During the war, about 500,000 people, mostly children, died of malnutrition, like the people of Bengal in 1943. But during the

same period 50 million cwts. of barley were used in brewing beer and 160 million cwts. of potato for distilling whisky. If the Germans had denied themselves beer and whisky, there would have been 36 grammes of barley and $3/4$ lb of potato per head per day for the whole population!

War conditions naturally and automatically brutalises the soldiers in course of time. Intoxication, by helping to repress the civilised man in him quickens the process. The military authorities desired quick results and so they not only permitted but supplied drinks at the battle fronts.

This is how General Crozier describes the drink problem in the British Army. It should be remembered that he was writing in 1930.

"In 1917, I urged with all my might that spirits should not be allowed to be drunk in the Army in France. These were forbidden in France to the French. With us, far from being forbidden, the drinking of spirits was made easy. Canteens and clubs behind the lines and at the bases were stocked with alcohol.

"Profiteers made money out of it at the expense of the youth of the nation, which, had there been no war, would never have learnt the taste of strong drink, until at least years of discretion had been reached.

"As it turned out, families and homes were broken up through this evil, habits being introduced into homes which, but for the war and the drink evil, would have remained unshackled and free.

"The legacy we have with us now. I know

at least a dozen cases myself, where the habits of drink and vices associated with it and the loss of control due to it, have reacted on men who today are only in their early thirties."

Drunkenness had a close connexion with the sexual life of the war. Alcohol acts as a sexual stimulant, specially so under the circumstances created by the war. The sexual aspect of drunkenness, however, did not disturb the authorities. In fact, they tried, to put down drunkenness by merciless punishment when inebriety threatened military discipline. In their opinion, drunkenness was to be feared because it facilitated the work of spies. A German statistician has proved that between 47 and 67 per cent of offence against discipline dealt with by courts-martial during the war were due to drunkenness.

It is interesting to examine the conduct of Churchmen at the different theatres of the war. All the "Christian" armies had regimental chaplains who were ranked as officers and who were officers in uniforms. These chaplains had to be in the actual firing line giving blessings to the dead and dying, making a christian death safe for the patriotic heroes. These chaplains had full and first-hand experience of life in the Army and the trenches. They certainly heard the filthy language constantly being used by the soldiers. They were face to face with the drunkenness that prevailed in military life. They were witnesses of the sexual prostitution and sexual perversions prevailing behind all the war fronts.

While after the war we have got books like "All Quiet on the Western Front," "The Road Back," "Not so Quiet....." "War, Wine and Women" "Good-bye to All That", "My Siberian Diary" and a host of others written by thoughtful laymen, all of which virtually protest against war as an institution by depicting the forces of social evil generated by war, *one searches in vain for any such protest coming from the members of the Christian Church.*

On the other hand, we get unpleasant descriptions of priests serving in the armies. There were numerous instances of priests who were as much drunken and as much immoral as the coarsest soldier. The great majority of priests were, of course, of a high moral order. The more intelligent and thoughtful among them realised their own paradoxical position in the midst of meaningless murder propagandised as the virtue of patriotism. Their sermons, their preachings and even their Bible became meaningless chatter against the scenes of misery, carnage and brutality. The hollowness and hypocrisy of "Christian" faith became so palpable to the fighting units that they openly laughed at priests and their religiosity. They were nick-named "sky-pilots" and soldiers never took them seriously.

The priest described in Jaroslov Nasek's war classic "*Infantryman Svejik*" was a drunken swine. Though the picture is undoubtedly a little overdrawn, the departure from real conditions is not great.

The Austro-Hungarian Army became speci-

ally noted for the number of priests who drank to excess quite openly and indulged in sexual intercourse with all sorts of women more or less secretly. Russian priests held the championship in licentious living and nobody need wonder since they had the infamous "Rasputin" as their example.

Eroticism at the War Front was the natural reaction to the forced abstinence the men had to undergo during periods of intense military activity, when the combatants were too much engaged with their death-dealing duties or too exhausted to be troubled by their sexual instinct. There were, however, long intervals in certain sectors of the battle-front when the soldiers had nothing to do except their routine duties and at this time their sexual instinct had full play. At a time when the men were completely deprived of feminine contact, sexual abstinence became a problem. A few months of sexual abstinence may be beneficial for health but there is a limit beyond which sexual abstinence may give rise to complications. Abstinence in the sense of *brahmacharya* requires conditions of clean living and a peaceful spiritual mental atmosphere. The filthy and verminous life of the trenches with scenes of death and destruction all around, living like rats in constant danger of death, are conditions that help to accentuate eroticism. The results of continued abstinence noticed in combatants at the various war fronts led Dr. Marestan, a celebrated French Scientist, to opine as follows :—

"Complete chastity is no more beneficial morally than physically. No one thinks so much

of sexual pleasure as the person in whom the sexual instinct is repressed. Just as starving people think far more of food than those who are normally nourished, so the unsatisfied sexual need leads to a constant pre-occupation with the subject which is reflected in the choice of reading matter, strange perversions, and more or less obscene talk. These unfortunate people are, for twenty-four hours of every day, the prey of erotic thoughts and dreams, and it absorbs all their will-power to combat this intensive pre-occupation, so that they have neither the time nor the energy to engage in serious activities.

“Sexually abstemious people are in far greater danger than normal people of becoming slaves to tyrannous passions. Nature never surrenders her rights, and if they are contested she sometimes takes a terrible revenge.”

Demoralisation was the greatest effect of abstinence and it was this loss of morale the authorities feared most. Here lies the explanation for the officially-sponsored brothels I have described in the earlier chapters. Realising the evil effects of enforced abstinence, the military authorities took an active part in the organisation of prostitution for the benefit of the combatants. The most Reverend Dr. Foss Westcott did not take this aspect of the case into view when he protested against military brothels in Calcutta in the year 1943.

Repressed sexual desires found vent in coarse and obscene talks, vulgar and obscene paintings and drawings, onanism and homo-sexuality and what is

worst, sodomy or sexual intercourse with animals. In fact, wherever soldiers were deprived of the possibility of normal sexual contacts, they were tormented by sex starvation. The language in the trenches, in the region of the Fronts and at the depots, was extremely coarse and vulgar. Notes, diaries, drawings and cartoons found in the trenches or with prisoners of war conclusively prove that obscenity of the worst kind prevailed everywhere in army life. The sexual obsession that held sway in the areas where women were wanting is proved by the obscene drawings on the walls which fantastically represented the sexual organs, nude women with hypertrophied breasts, enormous buttocks and the genital organs well in view. These drawings were mostly inscribed with disgustingly vulgar phrases.

War-profiteers did not lag behind to enrich themselves by exploiting the lascivious predilection of the soldiers. Books, magazines and newspapers were published ostensibly to introduce gaiety into the lives of the soldiers but actually to earn money by fanning the flames of lechery. Obscene photographs, known as double-pictures, sold like hot cakes in all army centres proving the erotic obsession of the heroes.

There were other but more harmful outlets for the libidinous tension of the soldiers. One was masturbation. On account of the world-wide prevalence of onanism, it cannot be called a perversion, not certainly when occasionally practised by adults as a substitute for normal sexual intercourse. But

more or less frequent masturbation may develop into a vice. The physical repercussions of onanism are closely allied with moral repercussions. Masturbation lowers man in his own estimation and develops in him morbid inferiority complex and neurasthenia.

The military hospitals contained many soldiers with emaciated faces, sunken eyes and jumpy nervousness not as a consequence of war experiences but due to persistent self-abuse. The occasional onanist at the Front frequently became incorrigible onanists. There is the story—obscene, but of tragic obscenity—of the Hungarian Major, who used to say—"Formerly my wife was my right hand but now my right hand is my wife." It is not surprising that the military authorities preferred prostitution with its attendant risks of infection with venereals to the possibility of entire regiments being demoralised by the practice of masturbation. To quote instances of recorded cases would mean filling these pages with filthy history. Those who are interested may look up the book already referred to by Magnus Hirschfeld and Gasper.

Some authors are of opinion that in addition to enforced sexual abstinence the prevalence of onanism at the Front may have been due to "the erotically stimulating effect of war itself." We have already referred to the eroticising effect of bombardment on women, and it is logical to assume that a similar effect is produced on men. There is such a mass of evidence to support this view that it would be a mistake to regard it as a theory. Bruno Vogel records the case of a sadistic major who masturbated

while he was watching a hand-to-hand encounter through a telescope. There is also the historically proved case of Napoleon Bonaparte, who at the battle of Augsburg had a woman brought to him with whom he had intercourse in his tent when the battle was at its highest pitch. The fact remains, as we have already mentioned it, that acts of violence excite the generative organs both in men and women.

Homosexuality was another abuse which was prevalent in the armies. Germany, for many years before even the Great War, was the home of homo-sexuality. Pederast clubs flourished in the country though there was statutory penalty against it. According to Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld, "it is a mistake to think that homo-sexuals are nervy effeminate weaklings. A great many homo-sexuals look as masculine as it is possible for any man of normal sexuality to look. During the War, it was no rarity to see a martial-looking six-footer in full kit one day and wearing dainty feminine clothes the next." That Hitler's once right-hand man, a great soldier and a great organiser, Earnest Von Rhoem was a confirmed homo-sexualist is common history.

CHAPTER XII

WOMEN AS WAR SPIES

Apart from being directly responsible for the conversion of many decent women into military prostitutes, the authorities of all belligerent countries employed women in the Secret Service in order to obtain the secrets of the enemy, to intercept messages and to secure possession of documents. Women can, by their seductiveness, exercise the greatest witchery over the men who come under their clutches. It is difficult for a man to refuse to answer a delightful creature who is sitting on his knees or perhaps sharing his bed, when she asks childish questions regarding the position of troops and on other military subjects. Women are born actresses and a male becomes a natural fool in the arms of a woman who easily makes him believe that she is really and madly in love with him. If, along with the intoxication of lust, the man has been intoxicated with spirits and drugs, as was usual in the days of war, the woman could do anything with the man. In the voluptuous atmosphere of the bed chamber it was easy for the woman to elicit military secrets.

Her personal beauty and sex-appeal were the principal assets of a woman spy and it is a well-known fact that the most famous women spies in history were all exceptionally attractive and great experts in the art of libido.

Inasmuch as the erotic weapons are of paramount importance in the case of a woman spy, this profession is most degrading for her. It is the height of immorality for any government to employ women in this profession, but, of course, it cannot be forgotten that no modern government is a moral institution.

Espionage is immoral for women not only from the sexual aspect of the profession. It is immoral from psychological standpoint also because it involves the betrayal by a woman of secrets deceitfully obtained from a man who had given her his confidence and good faith out of honest and sincere love for her. This is recognised by all, even those who employ women as spies. In the foreword to the book '*I was a spy*' the Rt. Hon'ble Mr. Winston Churchill says—"The elaborate deceit which is the essence of espionage casts it slur on those who undertake it." "Nevertheless," continues Mr. Churchill, "A Secret Service agent who is not actuated by any sordid motives, but inspired by patriotism, and ready to pay the well-known forfeit, deserves respect and honour from those he serves so faithfully."

Unfortunately, however, the experience of history is that in the great majority of cases, spies were actuated by "sordid" motives rather than from noble aspirations. We must leave out of this category those male spies who were naturally obliged to work with other than sexual weapons. The courage and bravery of Lord Robert Baden-Powell who during the last War remained for three years inside Germany

and carried out acts of sabotage and destruction behind the lines of the enemy, besides being a source of valuable information to his country, are little known but are worthy of being remembered by his country. The greatest figure among male spies was Lawrence of Arabia who utilised his intimate knowledge of the language and customs of Arabia in order to secure the desertion of the nomad tribes from their allegiance to Turkey.

The patriotic variety of women spies, those, that is, who led a chaste life and yet obtained success in their profession, were very few in number and they were certainly a credit not only to their kind but also to their country.

Apart from these, there were some who having fallen in love, had to choose between their duty and their sentiment. The British Intelligence Service had to deal with several such cases. There was the case of Emma Stubert who one day walked into her headquarters, threw down the bundle of banknotes she had received by post and declared, "I can't betray this officer, because I love him". There was also a Danish woman who was deputed to gain the confidence of certain very famous politicians who were on a visit to Copenhagen. It appears that this sentimental lady fell in love with the men and tearfully begged of her employers to be excused from the task entrusted to her. She promised to repay all the money she had received. Whether she did so, is not known.

Less honest than these two was an Italian woman who practically duped her employers, the

British Secret Service. She went on supplying false and imaginary information which it did not take her employers long to find out and they decided to inflict condign punishment on the traitoress. But she suddenly married the son of a very famous French diplomat and thus placed herself beyond the reach of vengeance of the Intelligence Service. But only a few days after her marriage this adventuress left her French husband and eloped with an American Officer.

Though there were cases when a patriotic woman adopted this degrading profession for the benefit of her country, patriotism played a very small part in the majority of cases. In most cases, espionage was a jumping-board for their career as courtesans while in others the craving for the thrill and excitement of a spy's life was the motivating factor.* Women rarely became spies from an intense desire to serve the national cause. This is the inevitable conclusion we have to form when we read of the numerous instances where women spies transferrèd their services from one government to another without the least hesitation. The number of those who served or professed to serve two governments at the same time was also not negligible.

This book is not concerned with the subject of political espionage but with the connection of espionage with the exploitation of woman as a sexual being. And, therefore, in the following pages will be found brief descriptions of the adventures of a few prominent spy-prostitutes.*

*The best book on political espionage, available in India, is "*Fifty Spy Stories*" published a few years ago by the *Times of India Press*.

(1) "MATA-HARI"

The first name that naturally occurs to us is that of the notorious Mata-Hari, the "nude dancer", whose story has been invested with undeserving romanticism by film-producers. She was executed by the French authorities as a German spy, but the spell which her beauty and voluptuousness cast over her numerous clients among high-placed Generals, statesmen and politicians was so strong that for a time many people considered her to be a martyr.

But revelations made after her death by many persons who had been in contact with her during her life-time conclusively prove that she was above all a common prostitute. She posed in France as a Hindoo dancer of Javanese extract, to increase the commercial value of her body. We have already explained in an earlier chapter that in the erotic field, the exotic, the foreign and the bizarre have the greatest attraction for debauched people. She was intelligent enough to exploit this psychological attraction by adopting the absurd name, "Mata-Hari"—a word which certainly is impossible in any of the Hindoo languages. There was none in Europe to call the bluff and there are still people in Europe who believe her to have been a real Hindu.

Her maiden name was Greta Gsell and she was of hundred per cent. Dutch extraction, without a drop of even Javanese blood in her. We trace her first in the service of a Captain MacLeod, as a "house-keeper", engaged by him in answer to an advertisement. She made him marry her but she cared little for the sanctity of the married tie. She

left her husband and came to Europe with another lover, Captain Pierre Masloff, with her four-year-old daughter, Louise. Her love for money and finery was so imperious that she visited houses of assignment (*i.e.* brothels) to earn the money for fine dresses. She was so dead to all the decencies of life that she never hesitated to take her little daughter to these places of adventure. She tried her hand in many other professions all of which were more or less connected with prostitution. She acted as a model and later she went on the stage to give what she called the sacred dances of the Brahmins. These were absolutely nude dances. These performances launched her in high life. From then on she became a high class prostitute sharing the beds of prominent diplomats, statesmen, army officers and several members of certain royal families.

Her success as a demi-mondaine was due not to her wit and intelligence, but entirely to her immense sex-appeal. This was so powerful that men in high places were prepared to make the greatest financial sacrifices to possess her. She could cast the spell of her physical charms on any person, and this had effect even on the soldiers who were detailed to execute her. One of the firing squad fainted and out of the eleven shots fired, as many as eight missed her altogether. This is how one of her biographers describes her :

"I have a bizarre recollection of Mata Hari. When I was in her presence, I felt attracted and repelled at the same time. She was not attractive in the literal sense of the word ; she exercised a sort

of witchery. Hers was a complex personality, with a singular mixture of qualities and defects. She combined the cunning of an animal with strange puerilities. She was vain and spontaneous, greedy and generous, reserved and loquacious, headstrong and whimsical, dominating and avid for pleasure and entirely unscrupulous. For the most part she was guided by her instinct rather than by her intelligence, which was mediocre."

As agent H21, she used to get a very high salary from her employers, the German Spy Service. Yet she would prostitute herself with any man for a few hundred francs. Her clients were of such high positions that for a long time, though suspected of espionage, proofs could not be obtained for convicting her. But her activities became so dangerous that the French Government had to arrest and convict her and shoot her as a spy.

(2) CATHERINE DMITRIEVNA

While Mata-Hari was a common harlot, Catherine Dmitrievna was a superb adventuress. She married the man, who, at the time of the last Great War, was the Russian Minister of War. She fell in love with the handsome Serge Miasoiedoff, a spy in German Service and helped her lover in his work by securing for him the innermost military secrets of the Russian Army which she cajoled out of her husband. Her lover was eventually caught and sent to the gallows, but she escaped punishment on account of her eminent position.

She was born in Siberia in the miserable home of a poverty-stricken Jewish pedlar. Nature had

showered all the charms lavishly upon her. Even at the age of fourteen she developed into a queenly beauty and became the cause of free fights among the youths of her village for the sake of her favours. Even at that age, she was conscious of her powers and she used her eyes and gestures to arouse the pugnacious instincts of her admirers. Her hair was long and jet black, her complexion lovely, her skin soft and delicate and her figure adorably symmetrical. One day she stole her father's savings and eloped with a young man of the village to Kiev. This lover deserted her as soon as her money was all spent.

She was, however, a brave girl conscious of her powers. The Inspector-General of the elementary schools of Ukraine, one Monsieur Boutovitch, had advertised for a girl secretary. Catherine had no qualification for the post, but she went to see him with an application. She got the appointment but never worked at her job. Instead, she shortly married the middle-aged Inspector of Public Instruction. Thus, she at once entered the upper middle-class of Russian Society and began a life of luxury. Undaunted by scandal, her middle-aged husband pampered her. She wore sumptuous dresses, lived in fashionable watering places of Europe and made love freely. During this period, when she was twenty years of age, she met at Carlsbad General Soukhomlinoff, aged sixty-three. In spite of the difference of forty-three years in age, the ambitious girl led him on till the infatuated old man proposed marriage, in order to possess her. She immediately

became his mistress leaving her husband to divorce her and, when this was granted, she got the General, the future Russian Minister of War, to marry her.

As the wife of the General, she met Captain Miasoiedoff. This man was Customs officer on the Polish border. He was an extremely handsome person and made easy conquests among women. He loved luxury and money and so, carried on smuggling which, as a Customs officer himself, was most lucrative for him. Many Russian Society women returning from the health-resorts of France, Austria and Germany, were subjected to Customs inspection at the Russian border. Many of these women tried to smuggle in dresses and other luxury articles, as the duties were very high. Captain Miasaieodoff would overlook those cases where the ladies were worthwhile cultivating. Many a lady of high position gave their bodies to the Captain in order to avoid the Government duties. As the Captain had a beautiful and charming exterior, they gave themselves the more willingly to him. It was on one such trips that Catherine met the Captain and fell passionately in love with this handsome Don Juan—and became his mistress.

When the War broke out, this Russian Captain, for the love of lucre, became a German Spy and as the wife of Russia's Minister of War was his infatuated slave, the Captain was able to supply valuable information to the Kaiser, in whose service he rose high and came to control an army of spies in the Polish sector.

1(3) EMMA STUBERT

Reference has already been made to Emma Stubert who has been described as the perfect woman spy. She was a Viennese girl who took service under the Allies. She received huge sums from the British Intelligence Service; lived sumptuously and devoted herself to a "man hunt" in the military and diplomatic circles of Vienna. Officers and Excellencies were unable to resist the feminine charms of this cultured woman. There was a Swiss chemist who was in the pay of the Austro-German Espionage Service. Emma Stubert turned his head by feigning love for him and then, as they were crossing the frontier into France, got him arrested one day. The Police arrested both and informed them that they would both be shot. The chemist was not willing to make a confession but Emma acted the part of a terrified woman and throwing herself into his arms wept bitterly and prayed to him to save both their lives by a confession. Weakness for the tearful adorable woman led him to confess which was required to sentence him to death.

On one occasion she was instructed to find out the method of transmitting military messages and orders in the German Army. Emma dressed herself up in mourning and went to the Front pretending to search for her dead husband's body and met, as if accidentally, the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, who gallantly offered to replace the defunct husband. The spy wanted nothing better. The live Grand Duke was certainly preferable to the imaginary corpse. The Grand Duke had

certain strange voluptuous tastes which she fully satisfied and she was thus able to supply valuable information to her employers.

Once in Copenhagen, however, she fell in love with a German Officer and gave up her service under the Allies, as already described.

(4) SOLANGE

The case of the French girl, Solange, proves that facts are stranger than fiction. She was born in an old respectable French family, was extremely beautiful and very sweet in temperament. She worked as a nurse and tended the patients with extreme care and tenderness. Her patriotism, on account of her birth and her behaviour, was above suspicion. After having dressed the wounds of the patients she would sit by the bedside of her soldier patients and listen with endless patience to the stories of War, which were sometimes too technical to be intelligible to a mere girl. She seemed to be so patriotically devoted to the cause of her country's defence that she appeared to follow the movements of French troops on a map that she kept suspended over her bed. This interest of hers in the movements of the army was kept alive by two French artillery officers, each of whom thought that he alone was the sole possessor of the body of this alluring bit of femininehood. She used to invite these officers to her room in turns and there when she abandoned herself to their erotic effusions, she expressed her anxiety for the welfare of her beloved lover and of the regiment to which he belonged and of its whereabouts. These particulars she used to supply to the

Germans. After her arrest it was found that this girl was under the hypnotic spell of a German dentist who had imposed his will on her and directed her conduct. When she awoke to the fact of having prostituted herself and of having betrayed her country, she took poison and died before her court-martial.

(5) MADAME "F"

Among the large number of woman spies operating all over the world was a beautiful woman F..... Tall, dark, with blue eyes, rich glossy black hair, she had a madonna-like appearance and employed her sex-appeal with the greatest success. The most difficult tasks were assigned to her. There was a Swiss Professor named Erhart, who lived a secluded life in a hotel, engaged in alleged scientific researches. The British Intelligence Service became interested in him and wanted to find out what his real activities were and deputed F.....for the work. The man seemed to be impervious to a woman's wiles. The loveliest woman, in Eve's dress before her fall, seemed to leave him cold. F....., by various subtle methods, at last succeeded to arouse his libidinous desire and then began to egg him on by refusing to surrender to him. When she was satisfied that the professor had completely lost his head, she agreed to come to his room. There, just at the crucial moment, she interrupted the old man and sent him to get her a certain perfume from the other room. Having managed to get him out of the way, she began a quick search of the room. Unfortunately for her, the professor's secretary, having

become suspicious at the revival of his master's erotic impulse, had concealed himself in the room and surprised the spy in her act. She fled disappointed.

But she made complete amends for this failure by a brilliant success, to which the British Navy is said to owe its victory in the Battle of Jutland. She was able to turn the head of the Commander of a German cruiser and she pretended to be so madly in love with him that she refused to be separated from him even when he was on duty. She told her lover that she wanted to fill his cabin with her perfume and the memory of her passionate embraces, so that he would always remember her on his dangerous voyages. The infatuated man took her into his cabin on the cruiser from which, during the period that the man was absorbed in nautical calculations, she managed to rifle a small yellow book containing the signalling code of the German Navy. It went into the possession of the British Navy to whom it proved of immense importance at the famous naval battle.

(6) THE "TURKISH BEAUTY"

"The Turkish Beauty" was one of the great adventuresses who took up espionage work. Though she was in the Allied service, she was at last arrested by the New York police on suspicion because she was carrying on a love-intrigue with a certain famous diplomat of a neutral country, but who was well-known to be friendly with the German government. One important point in the evidence against her was her luxurious life for which she was suspected

of being paid by the enemy powers. She met this charge by saying that she had wealthy lovers, but she could never name them. She eluded the hangman, however, because she was one day found dead in her cell and her death remained a mystery.

This woman had no fewer than ten aliases. In Paris she was known as Madame Mesie. She was Mrs. Heskett in London and Madrid. In Italy she registered in the hotels as Mademoiselle Davidovitch. When she came to America, she changed her name twice. New York Society knew her as Madame Despina and in Washington she assumed the aristocratic name of Baroness de Belville. She was one of those spies who were as thorough in their work as in their chase for pleasure. Her origin as well as her death are wrapped in mystery.

(7) MARTHE RICHARD, THE "LARK"

The French woman spy, Marthe Richard, known in the Intelligence Service as the "Lark" did yeoman's service for the British and French cause. She possessed certain masculine qualities. She was cool and of strong nerves, in fact she was one of the first woman aviators of the world. She had wonderful powers of observation and possessed a deep knowledge of human psychology, on account of which she was able to carry out some very dangerously skilful acts of espionage. In spite of these qualifications she was intensely feminine, with the sex-appeal required in a woman spy, in full measure. She was sent to Spain, where the German Naval espionage had their headquarters. She utilised her sex to win the love of a young German spy and

deliberately sought the favour of the Germans in order the more ably to discover their secrets. She appeared to work for the Germans and finally induced her lover to introduce her to the head of the German Espionage Service, Baron Von Krohn. The Baron fell headlong in love with her and she became his mistress in secret. The Baron set up a Beauty parlour in Madrid, as her ostensible means of livelihood and here he arranged to come to enjoy the physical charms of his charmer. The Baron arranged to meet with his spies in this beauty parlour, which came to be known as "The Larks' Mirror" and it became all the more easy for the woman to get the informations necessary for her employers.

(8) "MADAM DOKTOR"

The most legendary figure among all the women spies of the last War was the German super-spy, called "Fraulein Doktor" and known in France as Madame le docteur. Her exploits, more than that of any other spy, inspired numerous spy novels, films and plays that flooded the market after the War. She took up espionage as a profession long before the war and was not among those women who became spies for the sake of money and erotic adventure. Though some people have held that the "Doktor" remained a virgin throughout her career, this cannot be believed simply because no woman who refused to utilise her sex and to play the siren could achieve success as a spy. The woman spy's greatest asset was her body and unless she was prepared to offer it freely she could hardly expect to

subjugate men and extract secrets from them.

Long before the last War broke out, Europe had been sitting on a barrel of political gunpowder, expecting an explosion every moment. Each government was feverishly trying to obtain information about the military preparedness of other nations. This necessitated the employment of a large number of political spies both male and female.

At this time a German spy died and a number of documents containing notes was found sewn up in the lining of his coat. The German Espionage Service, however, was unable to decipher the notes. One day, a sixteen-year-old girl, named Anna Marie Lesser, walked into the office of Herr Mathesias, the Chief of the German Espionage headquarters and declaring herself to have been the friend of the dead spy offered her services to explain the notes.

She did this that evening in the presence of the whole General Staff, standing in front of a military map hanging from the wall and, with the notes in her hands, talked continuously for seven hours about recent French military manoeuvres. The amazed officers listened in awed silence to a little girl giving a lesson in military strategy that would have done credit to a most experienced general.

She was literally pounced upon by the German Espionage Service and just a week later she appeared in a small town in the Vosges as an "Art student of Geneva." Here certain divisions of the French Army were holding manoeuvres. She easily made friends with the Army officers, painted pictures and chatted a great deal asking questions. Her military

admirers discarded discretion on account of her tender age and still more tender charms. She was thus able to supply Matthesias with important informations about the French Artillery.

Returning to Berlin, Anna-Marie was made the Chief of a department of spies, whom she herself recruited after testing their abilities. In 1914, before the War broke out, she came and established her office in Brussels as a French girl. Here a young lieutenant named Rene Austin fell in love with this dazzling "French" girl. As lovers they took lovely sentimental walks near the frontiers. The young lady being an artist loved to paint pictures of the landscape. These pictures were sent to Berlin *via* Switzerland, where on removing the oil paint, Herr Matthesias found the tracings of military emplacements. One day she induced Lt. Austin to take her on a motor tour near the Dutch Frontier. When there, suddenly a page out of her lady's writing pad flew away and the gallant young officer stopped the car and got out to retrieve the page. Anna-Marie realised that her secret would be discovered as soon as Austin would secure that page. She immediately took the wheel and drove off furiously leaving the young man to shift for himself. Austin found the page and also discovered that it contained a plan of some fortifications. He tried to pursue the spy, but she managed to escape beyond the frontiers. The Frontier police saw the car hit against a tree, turn turtle and catch fire. They, however, did not notice the occupant coming out of the flames and jumping into the river. She swam

for three hours and was pulled out of water by a fisherman some miles down the river.

During the War, her chief headquarters were in Amsterdam, but her activities took in the whole of Europe. The counter-espionage services of the various Allied countries sometimes reported her presence simultaneously in different parts of Europe. In 1918, she appeared in Barcelona, Spain, as the wife of a wealthy American planter. She organised an ambulance brigade for voluntary service in the fields of Marne. Here, she met her old lover Austin and was recognised by him. She fled. With amazing courage she disguised herself as a French officer and wormed her way through the French lines, across the No Man's Land and into the safety of the German trenches. When she was at Amsterdam, the British counter-espionage system was able to place one of their men as her office assistant. Radio instruction to the German fleet at sea used to be transmitted in code through this office. The Allied spy, by informing his headquarters, saved much Allied shipping from sudden attacks. Once, three German cruisers which had gone to make a sudden bombardment of Hull in England, were met by the British Fleet ready for them and were sunk. As this news was known only to the "Doktor" and the assistant in that office, the Doktor next day shot her assistant deliberately when both were sitting in the office.

How much of the stories about the "Doktor" is true and how much false no one can say. During the War she became a morphine addict, taking to

the drug whenever she felt exhausted by her strenuous work. It is a fact that she worked like a horse, sometimes for twenty hours at a stretch. Before the war ended she fell ill and had to be removed to hospital where she died. In her case, it may be said that sex-appeal was not her only means for success. She was also a brilliant intellect which, if applied suitably, could have achieved lasting results for the good of humanity.

CHAPTER XIII

THE MINISTERING ANGELS

As soon as the War broke out in 1914, mobilisation of women of all ages, started simultaneously with the mobilisation of men for military service. Rich and poor, young and old, women in all the belligerent countries threw themselves into war work. Some knitted for the soldiers. Others organised entertainments for soldiers in the field and on leave. Others befriended lonely soldiers home on leave and so on.

Apart from these voluntary workers, the manufacturers, specially those who were Army suppliers, engaged women labourers not only to release the able-bodied men for military service, but also because female labour was cheaper.

While the women of the proletarian class became industrial workers, those of the middle and upper middle class joined as nurses. The largest contingent of War nurses in all the belligerent countries came from the middle-class. They included university students, dilettante artists and intellectuals, mothers of families, shop assistants. Even duchesses and sometimes princesses also enrolled voluntarily as nurses.

To describe the erotic aspect of the life of the nurses during the Great War is a difficult and delicate subject. It may give offence to many and specially, as another war, more devastating than the

previous one, is now on, and the authorities are daily inviting women to join as nurses, W. A. A. C.'s, *Stri-sevadarnis*, as alluring careers, who knows that we shall not be entangled in the all-pervasive barbed-wire nettings of the Defence of the Realm rules?

It would be sheer perversity to doubt the devotion of the many women who left the comfort and security of their homes to serve at the ambulance stations close to the War Fronts. How can one forget the self-abnegating heroism of the women who worked without rest for days together in the midst of the filth and horror of War, at the risk of their lives? There were magnificent types of women who were mothers and sisters to the wounded soldiers. While the Crimean War produced one Florence Nightingale the Great War produced many who have remained unsung.

But the question must be asked: Was patriotic fervour combined with pity and compassion for suffering soldiers the only motivating factor that impelled thousands of women to take up the work of nurses? It has to be admitted, unless we are prepared to be blind to facts, that there were other motives

The author of *Not So Quiet*, Helen Zenna Smith, was a woman and an ambulance driver in the War. Her testimony, therefore, about the mentality of the women who took up War work, is worthy of credence. She says:

"When I read the rubbish praising the indomitable pluck and high spirits of 'our wonderful War girls,' I want to throw things at the writers. Our

wonderful War girls—how bored we are with hearing it! We are not wonderful; there is nothing wonderful in doing what you've got to, because you've let yourself in for it. It's like having a baby—you're trapped once you've started. How the mob hangs on to a phrase and chews it to shreds! Like a dog with a bone. That eternal "doing our bit" too. The catchphrase of the newspaper. It has gone out of fashion here with the B. F.'s exit. There may be an odd few who enlisted in a patriotic spirit—I haven't met any, personally. Girls who were curious, yes; girls who were bored stiff with home (like myself) and had no idea of what they were coming to, yes; man-hunters like the B. F.; man-mad women, semi-nymphomaniacs, like Thrumms, who was caught love-making in an ambulance and booted back p. d. q. to England, yes; megalomaniacs like Commandant who love "bossing the show" and have seized upon this great chance like hungry vultures, yes; girls to whom danger is the breath of life, yes; but my observation leads me to the conclusion that all the flag-waggers are comfortably at home and intend to stay there."

The above is a sweeping generalisation but it does not alter the fact that the majority of women who served their country as nurses, ambulance-drivers etc., showed self-sacrificing devotion to duty. Even if they joined up out of a sentimental impulse, they stuck to it and through it in spite of terrible discomfort and suffering.

Helen Zenna Smith is not, however, alone in condemning the nurses and in attributing their

zeal in War work to unworthy motives. Charles Froval, in his *Histoire de L'arriere* says :

"From the first days of the War, the women and girls of the middle class besieged the offices of the Red Cross. All these shallow-minded creatures were full of enthusiasm and were prepared to do any sacrifice, so long as it was the fashionable thing to do. Pampering heroes was a smart and nice occupation. There was a prospect of sentimental adventure, new friends and charming experiences."

Among the misogynists who do not believe that women have a natural sympathy for the suffering of others, happens to be Otto Weininger, who died before the Great War. To him the impelling spirit of feminine psychology is self-love. In his *Sex and Character* he says.

"It was, in particular, feminine kindness and feminine sympathy that gave rise to the pretty legend about the soul of women, and the final argument to prove her morality is to point to her activities as a sick-nurse, as a sister of charity. Indeed, it reveals short-sightedness to regard women's role as a nurse as evidence of the quality of sympathy in her. The opposite is the truth.....It would be completely wrong to judge the role of women in this field otherwise than the utilitarian point of view."

Certain psycho-analysts agree with the above author in the view that some women take up the profession of nursing from an egoistic and, sometimes, erotic motives. One can ignore the opinion of Otto Weininger when we remember that, being

physically repulsive, he was unable to obtain the love of decent women and, for sexual satisfaction, had to resort to prostitutes. But one can hardly brush aside the opinion of thinkers like Professor Wilhelm Stekel when he writes, in his *Psycho-Sexual Infantilism*.

"People.....who are always desirous of coming to other people's aid, of giving them advice, comforting them, declaring their love for them.....are narcissists. At bottom they love no one but themselvesDuring the War, there were numerous examples of this type of Narcissism among the nurses.

"Here is a case (No. 137) which provides a striking illustration of the above.

"A very intelligent nurse has made the following confession to me :

"I am now forty-eight years old, and I can assure you that the only happiness I knew was the grateful look of a man I used to nurse. It was then that I had the only orgasm in my life.... I have had many affairs, but I always gave myself out of compassion....."

While we cannot dismiss these authoritative opinions, we must say that women become nurses not from any one motive but from many. Many do so to avoid war-time poverty, many more just for the fun of it and quite a number because it is just then 'the fashion' to do it. This last category of women are mostly snobs and it does not take the wounded soldier to find out who is the snob and who the real, kindly nurse. "The wounded soldier not only felt irritated, but gave expression, to his irrita-

tion when these snobbish women came to handle him. Magnus Hirschfeld and Gasper mention the case of a wounded soldier, who when a "lady" came to wipe his perspiration off his face, said,—“And now get out of here. You're the fifteenth woman who's been here this afternoon to interfere with me.”

In the German War novel—“Hagen im Weltkriege” (Hagen in world War), published anonymously, the soldier, Hagen, says this :

“Just as a slave may have a better or worse life, so a soldier. It all depends into whose hands he falls. These ladies, being the darlings of the doctors, can do just what they like. They ride in carriages, have excellent food, travel first-class on leave, and use the hospital orderlies to clean their rooms and windows.....I only object to the system by which a soldier, whose duty lies in obedience, should be exposed to all sorts of things. For example, in the examination ward of a garrison hospital, where the soldiers had to line up naked for the doctor, how three young geese in nurses' uniform came in and out of the ward on some pretext or another, giggling with satisfaction, the coarse creatures.”

The women of the idle classes wanted distraction from their monotonous existence and nursing came to them as a picturesque opportunity. Frederic Masson, of the Academie Francaise, said in a lecture :

“I have said it and I do not withdraw a single word : Some women regarded the wounded as erotic objects and played about with them in that sense,

"That was the substitute for tea parties, and probably some of them found as much pleasure in it as in an advanced flirt. They had neither the seriousness nor the indifference that can only come from two sources—science and faith."

There were a large number of nurses who were prostitutes in private life. In every belligerent country the authorities had to take special measures to prevent abuses and scandals caused by prostitute-nurses.

The nurses had a very bad moral reputation among the soldiers themselves, who, as a rule, considered them all as common prostitutes. This opinion may have been formed on account of the existence of real prostitutes among nurses.

Behind the Russian front, the number of prostitutes in nurses' uniforms was colossal. After the War, the Berlin police arrested a large number of prostitutes in that dress. Besides, the nurse's uniform was the favourite dress of women swindlers and adventuresses and cases of cheating by fake nurses were numerous in the Police courts of all the warring countries.

While it was easy to recognise the downright prostitute among the war nurses, as also the 'man-hunter', it was difficult to distinguish between those who joined from a spirit of service and those to whom nursing was a form of sexual satisfaction. Even those who went in for nursing for its own sake, a libidinous factor was ever present.

The soldiers, however, always looked at them from an erotic angle and in their talks the nurses

figure as little better than prostitutes though the authorities and the newspapers described them as ministering angels. And this propaganda in their favour did not remove the contemptuous attitude of the soldiers towards the nurses. This was the greatest irony of the position. Magnus Hirschfeld and Gasper quote a war-song popular among the Hungarian soldiers. Here is a free translation :

They say there are no prostitutes at.....

But what are the nurses for ?

Their eyes are blue, their eye-brows dark.

They were born to be.....

It has been recorded by many writers that the soldiers felt great shyness in the presence of the war-nurses. In an ordinary hospital, the professional nurse is looked upon as a nurse rather than as a woman, but the young ladies who worked in war hospitals were inevitably regarded as erotic objects by their patients. In *All Quiet on the Western Front* is a very telling scene of bashfulness in a hospital train when the hero, whose leg was in plasters, wanted to urinate but was unable to tell the young nurse until a friend came to the rescue and used the school-boy language—"he wants to leave the room."

It is a fact, however, that while the soldiers felt this shyness, the nurses or the "high-born" ladies who acted as volunteer nurses, never felt the least bashfulness in watching the processes of male organism. The diary of an Austrian soldier contained this :

"It is indescribable the way the ladies who took over the transport of wounded at the base in G—treated us. The majority of us were in deplorable

condition, shot to pieces and exhausted from the journey. The woman often insisted, for no reason whatever, that we should uncover. Every two minutes we were asked whether we wanted to relieve ourselves."

Frederic Masson to whose lecture reference has already been made has the following to say with regard to the average soldier's attitude to the nurses with regard to menial services—

"It was impossible to dislodge from the minds of the wounded themselves that the place of young girls and women was not at their sick-beds. I think a certain Senegalese soldier put this view in a most striking manner, though in rather crude terms.

"This man asked for the bed-pan. It was brought to him by a young and pretty woman, and the savage said to the civilised lady, "Thou hast no white hair. Thou art not a mother. Thou art disgusting, get away."

"Which of the two was right?

"I have seen wounded men blush, upset themselves and cover themselves up when their wounds were being dressed by women who were not even very young, and I have heard them ask for, and even demand, older nurses who were no longer women and who might have been their mothers. And there was no indecent thought behind all this, but merely a modesty... ..It is these men who are trying to teach us a lesson. They are not understood."

The idleness of invalids who are not in pain and specially of those who are convalescing, is apt to engender sensuality and arouse sensual instincts.

These carnal desires found their objects in the nurses. The latter on their part could not, and did not, remain insensible to this intensely sensual atmosphere. They ceased to be satisfied with dressing the physical wounds of their patients and began to perform operations on their hearts as well. They came to play certain roles in the lives of the patients, which they would have been frightened of in peace times. Their caressing glances, their tenderness in touch and speech, their charms had a curative effect. From tenderness to intimacy was not a long journey.

If the nurses indulged in amorous distractions, it was but natural. Their work was arduous. Sometimes, their hours of duty kept them at work for twenty-four hours during which they saw appalling scenes of human suffering. As a result of these sights, their nerves were always "on edge" and they naturally wanted to deaden sensibilities. Many took narcotics while others found in carnal love a relaxation of the tension of their nerves. This is best illustrated by the following passage in *Not So Quiet*.....

"I see in the years to come old men in their easy-chairs fiercely reviling us for lacking the sweetness and softness of our mothers and their mothers before them ; chiding us for the language that is not the language of the gentlewomen ; accusing us of barnyard morals when we use love as a drug for forgetfulness, because we have acquired the habit of taking what we can from life while we are alive to take..... clearly do I see these things".

In the same book, the girl Trix, coming to London to get over the complications of a passing sex-experience in the war zone, says to her sister :

“You don’t understand what it’s like out there—the atmosphere. You can’t call your soul your own We are like kids out of school when we get loose—pity, our games aren’t as harmless. The boredom and the rules, rules..... No wonder we go a bit mad off duty.....don’t know what you’re doing half your time.....And the men, making love to you one day and dead the next. I’ve been on leave twice with different subs and they are both dead.....they don’t think anything rotten of a girl who sleeps with them nowadays, just that she’s fool if she doesn’t. Cast-iron virgins they call them who won’t. There aren’t many of them knocking about by all accounts, a lot of them swank they are, but they ’re not. Easy for the plain ones, the men don’t worry them much ; but I’ve got to the stage of worrying what’s wrong with me if a sub doesn’t ask me to sleep with him—that’s what the war has done with me—pretty, isn’t it ?”

No wonder that sexual relations between the nurses and the wounded soldiers in many hospitals became the rule than the exception.

Not a single ex-soldier of the Great War, if he is honest, will deny the existence of this state of affairs.

In the environment of the military hospitals, there were no reserves regarding the secrets of the body. So the sexual act was treated with considerable indulgence both in conversation and practice.

The nurses, doctors and patients did not trouble to create an artificial smoke-screen of mystery and modesty around what they considered as a perfectly natural action. This is the reason why the next bed neighbours of the wounded soldier, Levandowski, in the *All Quiet on the Western Front* enabled him to have sex-relations with his wife in the hospital ward in their presence, when he met his wife after many months. As the book is too well-known and the passage describing the scene more so, therefore it is not considered necessary to quote it here.

The purpose of this book is simply to state the facts which prove that War is the antithesis of civilisation and breeds sexual vices. There is no desire to apportion blame to any particular individual or class of individuals. If the nurses behaved as they did, we cannot blame them for their conduct. In the abnormal circumstances that the war had placed them, they cannot be expected to have done otherwise. In spite of widespread sexual immorality among the nurses, there were thousands among them who by their self-sacrificing devotion earned the gratitude of thousands and thousands of suffering soldiers. The War, not they, should be blamed.

If religious preachers want to blame any one for sex-immorality during war time, they should go to the war-fronts and find out from experience that sex license is the least aspect of the bestialities that are let loose by a modern war. War changes all moral values. Truthfulness, justice, kindness are all destroyed by War. Compared with these, sexual chastity has mighty little value.

CHAPTER XIV

WAR AND CIVILISATION

It has become a truism to say that the Allies, in 1918, won the War and lost the Peace. The result, however, shows that they not only lost the Peace in the political field but also in the social field. The sex-immorality which appeared in an epidemic form during the War became endemic in the whole of Europe during the years that intervened between 1919 and 1939. The best book on the subject of European morals during the interim period between the two Wars is Paul Bureau's *D'Indiscipline des mœurs* (literally, the Indiscipline of Morals) which has been translated into English under the title "Towards Moral Bankruptcy." Mahatma Gandhi has quoted profusely from this book in his *Self-Restraint versus Self-Indulgence* which was published by the Navajiban Press in 1927.

M. Bureau gives the following quotation in his book from another writer, M. Leopold Monod :

"It is a fine thing to go to war in order to cast down infamous abuses, and to break the chains of those who suffer from them. But how about men whose fears have not known how to guard their consciences from enticements ; men whose courage is at the mercy of a caress or a fit of sulks ;.....men who with no shame, perhaps glorifying in the exploit, repudiate the vow which in a joyous and solemn hour they made to the wife of their youth ;

—how can such men be liberators ?”

He is here referring to the profligate and licentious life of the great French statesmen and politicians. And, speaking of France, Paul Bureau writes—as quoted by Mahatma Gandhi :

“Thus, whichever way we turn, we always find that various forms of our moral indiscipline have caused serious hurt to the individual, the family, the society.....The licentious conduct of our young people, prostitution, pornography and marriages for money, vanity or luxury, adultery and divorce, voluntary sterility and abortion, have debilitated the nation and stopped its increase ; *the individual has been unable to conserve his energies and the quality of the new growth has diminished simultaneously with its quantity.* ‘Fewer births and more fine men’ was the watch-word of those who thought they could assimilate the breeding of men to that of sheep or horses.

“Moral indiscipline at once dries up the fountains of the race, and hastens the wear and tear of the adults whom it debilitates both morally and physically.” (Italics mine)

The above was quoted by Mahatma Gandhi thirteen years before Marshal Petain, in a broken voice and in the midst of sobs, informed his countrymen, over the ether, that surrender to the invader was the only means of saving France, which had been weakened by a life of luxury and immorality and outnumbered on account of the cult of birth-control. In the midst of hatred and lies generated by war, the real causes and effects of war are forgotten and

even when war ends, those in whose hands the exhausted multitudes leave the work of re-organisation, give little heed to the spiritual and moral factors that alone can prevent war.

It is not only absurd but also presumptuous to say that any modern war can be or is waged in the name of civilisation. Wars in history for the last two thousand years have had no element of civilisation in them. Huge factories, where men sweat in order to turn out luxuries like automobiles, gramophones or radio sets, while a few men get the opportunity to live a pampered existence, corrupting sex-morality, economic morality and political morality, are not the measure of civilisation. Civilisation means the moral virtues—truthfulness, tolerance and forgetfulness of the ego. Sex-morality follows from these moral virtues. When man forgets the other moral virtues, as he inevitably must when a war is going on, sex-morality becomes an issue of minor consequence.

A capitalistic hold on society is inimical to the growth of moral virtues. Capitalism corrodes the mental character and stamina of human beings and sex-immorality is the natural result of the loss of mental stamina. Wars are waged between two opposing groups of capitalists for the preservation of empires, territorial or economic and the uneducated, thoughtless, head-line reading public are stampeded into national hatreds, the result of which we find in the massacre of innocents by air-raids and other man-killing devices. The nature of a capitalistic war is best illustrated by the results

of such a war. Vengeance was the key-note of the Brest-Litovsk and Versailles treaties. As against these, we can place the Russo-Finnish Treaty that was signed between Russia and Finland in March 1940. Russia could have annexed Finland or, at least, could have imposed as severe terms as the other treaties. The Socialist State, however, had waged a protective war and the terms of the Treaty were therefore extremely just. Not only this. The country showed unusual restraint when the war ended in Russia's favour. This is what the special correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* telegraphed to his paper—"No public ceremonies or rejoicings have been held here or elsewhere over Finland's capitulation. There is no show of bunting and no parades" (*Daily Telegraph*, March 15, 1940). This is the conduct of a civilised nation.

But in the wars of today we find only the animal passions in full play, and the sexual frenzy, a description of which I have given in the previous chapters, was only one of the aspects of animality that, in a war, bursts the bounds of restraint that society imposes on itself for the sake of its orderly evolution.

It must not, however, be supposed that the sexual frenzy we noticed during those war-years was a sudden phenomenon. In the evolution of social thought cataclysms like an earthquake do not take place. What we are fond of describing as revolutions are but the culminating phase of a long process of preparation. The immorality of the war-years was the culmination of a long process of

change that was introduced into European society by the establishment of a capitalistic economy. Empires and Industrialisation created a class of men to whom wealth and money became the source of satisfying the cravings of the senses. Woman is one of the objects of sensual satisfaction. In a very subtle way the process for cheapening women began even in the nineteenth century. The Feminist Movement can be traced back to 1792 when *Defence of the Rights of Women* was published by Mary Woolstencroft. The capitalist was a gainer on account of the Feminist Movement. Woman labour has always been cheap. The economic emancipation of woman meant on the one hand, more profits to the employers by the employment of cheaper women labour. On the other, it meant the sex-emancipation of woman, which made it easy for the employer and the idle rich to indulge in carnal pleasures. It must not be forgotten that capitalist method of production multiplies "Wealth" (in the economic sense) no doubt, but it also increases poverty among the masses. By the theory of a "high standard of life," wants are increased and in the process the majority of human beings are barely able to satisfy the fundamental wants of human life—food and clothing. Despite "industrial prosperity" men are unable to earn sufficiently to maintain themselves and their families. At first women and girls of the poorest classes went to the factories to work by the side of their husbands and fathers. The intellectual labourers—the middle classes—in their striving for "improved standard of life" also found

themselves hard up and their women also had to man the factories and offices. It is, in fact, the "higher standard of life", which means cinemas, theatres, electric gadgets in the home, fineries in clothing, that compels women to go out for work to add to the income of the family.

As soon as the woman goes out to work and becomes economically independent, she acquires sex independence also and the right for the free disposal of her body. A woman who earned her own living could afford to satisfy her natural sexual instincts without economic aid from a man. A glance at the statistics of illegitimate births during the Great War will show that the largest percentage occurred among working girls, specially factory workers.

European systems of education are not based on the civilising principles of "*Brahmacharya*" and "*Ahimsa*". The purposiveness of European life was directed not towards moral power, but towards the attainment of physical power over other human beings. This meant an intensification of efforts for more riches and higher positions in economic and political spheres. Selfishness was the essence of such purposiveness.

In such an atmosphere, the woman, emancipated as a political individual, tended to become, on account of the demands of a high standard of economic life, an abject slave to the lustful desire of man. The free woman in modern society is the bond-slave of a higher standard of life.

Before the War, both on the continent and in

England, the tendency towards gradual sexual emancipation of woman was going on. Apart from the freedom from sexual restraints inherent in the life of the low-class industrial workers, there arose, among the idle women of the upper middle class, a class of authors, actresses and artists, who cared nothing about world opinion and deliberately flouted moral conventions. Upto the out-break of the War in 1914, these women, undoubtedly of high intellectual calibre, were despised but secretly envied by respectable women.

While there was organised movement for the economic emancipation of woman, there was certainly no organised movement for her sexual emancipation. This was not necessary. The one followed the other automatically.

So, when the War came in 1914, European society was ready for the conditions that I have described in this book.

What we call Western "civilisation" is something which has nothing to do with the moral evolution of man. There is no attempt on the part of any state in that 'civilisation' to find out what 'man' is in relation to Time and Space. That eighty or ninety revolutions of the earth round the Sun is but a moment in eternity is a question about which 'civilisation' as connoted by the 'State' tried to keep Europeans in ignorance. Civilisation, as we in India and China know it, is an attempt to find out the link between this earthly existence and that beyond it. Christianity by its theory of Redemption and Resurrection has struck at the root of that questioning.

The basic education for that questioning must provide for tying down of the demands of the senses. Man possesses Will to inhibit the strongest animal passions which are four in number, (आहार-निद्रा-भय-मैथुन,) Āhar (food), Nidrā (sleep), Bhaya (fear) and Maithun (lust). The strength that enables him to inhabit and repress these lifts a man up from the animal plane, and makes a superman of him. Inhibition, therefore, of these instincts is the privilege of Man for the attainment of his moral purposiveness. Education in a civilised society must provide the curricula for such inhibition and repression.

Looked at from this angle, the much-advertised person known as Freud becomes a great fraud on Western 'Civilisation.' His theory has contributed in a great measure to the increase of sexual immorality in Europe where the post-War generation of the youth learnt from him that repression warped the naturalness of man. Libido is not an insurmountable instinct of man. It begins only to work when the others,—hunger, sleep and fear—are satisfied. The Yoga system of physical and mental culture enables man to overcome these hankerings and gives him the power to surmount the physical laws of nature. Freud has vitiated Western society by a fraudulent theory for these many years.

Neither war nor Freud are expressions of a process of civilised evolution of society.

ERRATA

Page	Line	
10	24	"brothel" should be "brothels"
11	8	"wisel ydecided" should be "wisely decided"
11	25	"Clemencean" should be "Clemenceau."
12	20	"Germand" should be "German"
16	3	"Expeditions" should be "expeditious"
106	27	"Wasa" should be "was a"
113	16	"times" should be "Times"
113	25	"protsted" should be "protested"
116	25	"wine a" should be "wine as"
117	2	"that made more" should be "that made them more"

